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SHADOWS

OF

THE OLD BOOKSELLERS.

By CHARLES KNIGHT.

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"Now learning itself is a trade. A man goes to a bookseller, and gets what he can. We have done with patronage. In the infancy of learning, we find some great man praised for it. This diffused it among others. When it becomes general, an author leaves the great, and applies to the multitude."—JOHNSON, in 1773.

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TO

GEORGE LILLIE CRAIK,

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST,

As a Memorial of a Friendship

WHICH COMMENCED NEARLY FORTY YEARS AGO,

IN OUR MUTUAL DESIRE TO MAKE KNOWLEDGE A COMMON POSSESSION,

INSTEAD OF AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY,

I INSCRIBE, WITH THE TRUEST REGARD, THESE SHADOWS OF A PAST AGE OF LETTERS.

CHARLES KNIGHT.

INTRODUCTION.



PROPOSE in this little work to attempt some delineations of a series of personages whose doings may, upon a hasty view, appear to have too much of a commercial character to be generally interesting. At any rate they may seem more fitted for the valuable but somewhat dry details of bibliography, than to be included under a title which may indicate something as much akin to fiction as to fact. In 1851 and 1852 I wrote for Mr. Dickens's 'Household Words' a series of sketches under the title of 'Shadows;' by which title I sought to indicate their half ideal, half real, character. Those 'Shadows' had for the most part the interest which belongs to romance as well as to history. The subjects of the present outlines, with a few exceptions, are little fitted for imaginative pictures of startling adventures, or of curious details of domestic life. But they have another sort of interest. They flit before me, ever accompanied with shadows of many of the immortals of literature. They are obscure and ill-defined until the period of the Restoration; but

when a reading public is beginning to be formed, they become something more than names upon title-pages. As they walk the earth, from the middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth, I see a band who, during five generations, have been carrying forward the great work of national enlightenment, sometimes, indeed, in a narrow and mercenary spirit, but not unfrequently in a spirit far above that of mere money-getting. I am not about to write their biographies. They will "come like shadows, so depart;" but as they pass over the stage, they will tell something like a connected story of literary progress, in its commercial relations, up to a time when my own experience, imperfect as it was, enabled me to catch some glimpses of its modern aspects.

In the 'Typographical Antiquities' of Ames and Herbert are recorded the names of three hundred and fifty printers in England and Scotland, including foreign printers engaged in producing books for England, who flourished from the time of Caxton's press to very nearly the beginning of the reign of James I.; that is, from 1474 to 1600. In the term "printers" are included "booksellers." There was scarcely any division of these, and of other cognate branches of the book-trade, until very modern times. The dealers in old books, the publishers of new books, the book-printers, the printers of journals, and even

the book-auctioneers and printsellers, held a common place in the registers of that ancient company which had existence before the introduction of printing, that of the "Stationers or Text-writers, who wrote and sold all sorts of books then in use." The division of employment amongst all those connected with "paper and print," as capitalists, was of very slow growth, as it was also amongst the labourers. The earliest printers had to do everything for themselves; to construct the materials of their art,—types, presses, and every other instrument and appliance. The art of printing, in its rude beginnings, exhibits the slowness with which the production of books had become less rude. In the same way some of the facts I shall have to record show how the commerce of books gradually assumed less of a retail and even peddling character. In a former work I said, "the most difficult labour of the ancient printer, and that which would necessarily constitute the great distinction between one printer and another, had yet to come. He had to sell his books when he had manufactured them; for there was no division of the labour of publisher and printer in those days." The present volume will show how long that union prevailed. The separation of the employments, perhaps, diminished the risk of publishing; for the printer-publisher might often be tempted into rash

adventures for the purpose of employing his presses. On the other hand, the bookseller-proper loses the manufacturer's profit, and must put a corresponding price upon his commodity. Each system has its risks and its advantages. But the risks of the publishing branch of a large commerce will probably grow less and less with its natural extension. The production of dear *books for the few* is nearly obsolete; and the results will follow the unvarying process of an earlier period. "For some years after the invention of printing, many of the ingenious, learned, and enterprising men who devoted themselves to the new art which was to change the face of society, were ruined, because they could not sell cheaply unless they printed a considerable number of a book; and there were not readers enough to take off the stock which they thus accumulated. In time, however, as the facilities for acquiring knowledge which printing afforded created many readers, the trade of printing books became one of less general risk; and dealers in literature could afford more and more to dispense with individual patronage, and rely upon the public demand."* The transition period is most fruitful in mistaken calculations as to the power of meeting a large cost for original literature, by the sale of cheap *books for the many.*

* William Caxton: a Biography

The general interest in "The Old Booksellers" must be derived from that connexion with men of letters, which was principally but not exclusively confined to London. In this relation they furnish many examples of ability, courage, perseverance, and, I may add, honesty, in their calling, which ought to neutralise the desire which still clings to some clever writers to represent them as born to realise the converse of Pharaoh's dream, that the fat kine should devour the lean kine. If authors and publishers understood their mutual interests there would be little distinction between the lean kine and the fat, and they would equally flourish on the same pastures. There was formerly only one mode in which a writer could go to the public without the intervention of what has been called "the false medium." He might send out proposals for subscription, and receive the full price for each copy. Pope made a fortune by his *Subscription* books; but Johnson saw that the time for that mode of seeking the just rewards of authorship was passing away. "He that asks subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him." The system came in time to be regarded as undignified; and then the author left the trading part of the operation to the Publisher. Though the rewards of literary labour might be less, it was deemed better to take the broad road, which

saved a writer from humiliation and commercial liability.

When the system was established under which "a man goes to a bookseller and gets what he can," it seems to have worked satisfactorily to both authors and publishers till the partnership became embittered by mutual jealousies. The tradesman began to fancy that he advanced all the capital, and had all the risk. The man of letters, seeing that his expenditure of skilled labour was also as real an advance as the cost of paper and printing, demurred to the principle of the material advance having a larger and a prior remuneration than the intellectual. Thus it was, I presume, that Campbell lauded the first Napoleon because he had shot a bookseller; and that Coleridge, in his 'Devil's Thoughts,' wrote—

> "He went into a rich bookseller's shop—
> Quoth he, 'We are both of one college,
> For I myself sate, like a cormorant, once,
> Fast by the tree of knowledge.'"

The time is held to have arrived when authorship is a more gainful calling than of yore; and it may therefore be concluded that "the false medium" has become a juster standard of relative value.

Although the leading purpose of my little work is to show Booksellers in their capacity of Publishers, it is impossible to limit these Shadows of a past time to a

class whose especial business was to obtain an interest in copyrights, to employ printers, and to sell the books wholesale to which their names were affixed on title-pages. There was no such class among the *Old* Booksellers. Many had printing-offices; they all kept shops; some dealt not only in printed books but in stationery: bookbinders were not unfrequent amongst them; and up to very recent times they were the chief proprietors of newspapers. The area I have to survey is therefore a large one; but it is not necessary that it should all be mapped out, or that I should fill the background with a great many figures. One principal Shadow will succeed another; and round each of these, as a representative man of a particular era, I may group many minor Shadows, in some general relation to the times in which the leaders and the rank-and-file marched on in their common battle against ignorance.

My attempt to call up Shadows that might represent something of the substance of literary progress, is far less complete than it might have been could I have included in one volume other names that naturally presented themselves. My plan for this volume has not included the publishers of books exclusively connected with the learned professions. Others, although they have distinct relations with books and bookselling, would more fitly form the

principal subjects of a separate series. For example: Amongst the *Printers*, BOWYER, NICHOLS, BASKERVILLE, BULMER, FOULIS, would claim a prominent place, not forgetting WALPOLE and his Strawberry-hill Press. BEWICK, the reviver of wood-engraving, would open a new era of book illustration. BOYDELL would take the lead of the *Printsellers*. Of *Book Auctioneers*, COCK, CHRISTIE, PATERSON, LEIGH, EVANS, would suggest some curious details of Bibliomania. WOODFALL, ALMON, PERRY, WALTER, STUART, as *London Journalists*, would be surrounded by the most marked party men and political writers. *Provincial Journalists*, such as GEORGE FAULKNER, RAIKES, MONTGOMERY, BAINES, would demand more than a cursory notice. CONSTABLE and MURRAY, as representatives of the higher criticism of the early years of the nineteenth century, might fitly close these sketches.

I have endeavoured to make the present volume tolerably complete as regards *Old* Booksellers connected with general literature. Yet I am aware that some names might have here claimed a place, as belonging as much to the end of the eighteenth century as to the beginning of the nineteenth. Commencing with those who flourished in the days when books were a luxury for the few, I have brought this Series down to the times when a literary revo-

lution was impending, in the necessity for providing reading for a larger number. Another decade or two thus largely added to the file of the booksellers. "The trade" became an important branch of home manufacture. Some of the founders of great modern houses, such as the LONGMANS, the RIVINGTONS, and the BALDWINS, have been *briefly* indicated. A fuller notice would appear due to the place they and their successors have filled in the commercial history of our literature. I have naturally made those Shadows more prominent that have well-defined personal attributes. Perhaps I may be accused of having inclined too much towards those who were writers as well as booksellers. Yet I cannot believe that a taste for literature and a capacity for authorship should necessarily have been incompatible with carrying on a trade in books, with all the sagacity required for success in any commercial operation involving some risk. There was an axiom amongst *some* of the old vendors of literary wares, that a bookseller should know nothing of books beyond their title pages. Osborne, whom Johnson knocked down with a folio, saying "lie there thou lump of lead," was one of the tribe of whom ignorance was the badge. Elmsley, honoured by Gibbon as one of the most instructive of friends and companions, was the type of many a one presented

in these Shadows, of whom it could not have been said,

"He guards the treasures which he can't enjoy."

Altogether, the deficiencies of the present volume might urge me to undertake a second series. Without pledging myself to such an attempt, I may possibly employ my leisure in collecting some of the necessary materials, which, like those upon which the present volume has been based, have to be sought for in odd corners, as well as in open spaces, accessible to all.

Hampstead, October 19, 1865.

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SHADOWS OF THE OLD BOOKSELLERS.

SHADOWS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THOMAS GUY.

IN commencing this volume with the story of one who was more remarkable as a great public benefactor than as a bookseller, I have to bear in mind the especial object of these Shadows, which I have stated to be this,—to give something like a connected view of literary progress, in its commercial relations, for about a century. I have felt that there was some apparent reason for what has been said of the founder of Guy's Hospital, that "though claimed by booksellers as one of their body, his property was acquired by stockjobbing rather than by literature." * Nearly all the popular accounts of Thomas Guy appear to touch slightly upon his bookselling operations. In Mr. Cunningham's excellent 'Handbook of London,' he is mentioned as "a bookseller in Lombard Street, who is said to have made his fortune ostensibly by the sale of Bibles, but more, it is thought, by purchasing seamen's tickets, and by his great success in the sale and transfer of stock in the memorable

* Knight's 'London,' vol. v. p. 372.

South Sea year of 1720." The only contemporaneous notice of Guy, the bookseller, is by John Dunton, in a volume printed in 1705, of which book and its author I shall have to speak fully:—"Mr. Thomas Guy, in Lombard-street. He makes an eminent figure in the Company of Stationers, having been chosen Sheriff of London, and paid the fine, and is now a Member of Parliament for Tamworth. He entertains a very sincere respect for English liberty. He is a man of strong reason, and can talk very much to the purpose upon any subject you will propose. He is truly charitable, of which his Almshouses for the Poor are standing testimonies." The nearest approach to an exact account of his career was published within fourteen years after his death. William Maitland prefixed a memoir of Guy to his account of Guy's Hospital, published in his History of London, in 1739. His narrative is far more precise than the brief life in Nichols' 'Literary Anecdotes;' which memoir, in some respects, appears to show that modern biography has its mythical periods as well as ancient history. Guy's birthplace is very exactly defined by Maitland. "He was born in the north-east corner-house of Pritchard's Alley, (two doors east of St. John's churchyard), in Fair Street, Horsleydown." Amidst the changes of Old London, Fair Street still exists, and has a due place in the Post Office Guide to principal streets and places. It is at the eastern extremity of Tooley Street, where Horsleydown begins, and at a short distance from the Thames. The Down where horses once grazed, and where, probably, the child Thomas Guy once played,

is now built over. The father of this boy was a lighterman and coal-dealer, and it is most likely that the young son of a man so occupied would be familiar with the locality between Horsleydown and London Bridge. One building seems to have lived in his memory in connexion with early associations. St. Thomas's Hospital, an old almonry, had been bought by the citizens of London at the dissolution of the religious houses, as a place of reception for diseased people. It was fast falling into decay when Thomas Guy looked upon it in his boyhood.

In what manner, or where, Thomas Guy was educated in his earliest years, there appears to be no record. When he was eight years old his father died. His mother was a native of Tamworth. After her husband's death she returned to that town, and soon after married again; "however," says Maitland, "she took care to have her children carefully educated, and at a proper age put her son Thomas apprentice." It would appear highly probable that he resided with his mother at Tamworth, and was there educated. His almshouses for the poor, mentioned by John Dunton, in 1705, were in that town, and appear to have been amongst his earliest charitable endowments. They were for fourteen poor men and women, with pensions for each occupier; and what was and is a rare provision for the poor, they were furnished with a library. Whether properly educated or not for the business of a bookseller, for which some tincture of learning was then required, Thomas Guy was bound apprentice in September, 1660, for eight years, to Mr. John Clarke, bookseller, in the porch of Mercer's Chapel. Although

Mercer's Hall and Mercer's Chapel, in Cheapside, were swept away by the fire of London in 1666, Thomas served out his due time; took up his livery as a member of the Stationers' Company; and having seen Cheapside, the Poultry, and Cornhill in ruins, found, in 1668, a little shop, newly built, in which he could carry on his business, "near Stocks Market." It requires some effort of imagination to credit that the area upon which the Mansion-house now stands was, for some centuries, a market for butchers and fishmongers, deriving its name from the Stocks, which were set up in the public thoroughfare for the punishment of evil-doers. The whole place was swept clean by the fire of 1666; and then the sheds and the stalls found another local habitation by the side of Fleet Ditch, and the Stocks Market became a pleasant place for the sale of fruits and flowers, and was planted on the east with rows of trees. The shop of Guy was at the angle formed by Cornhill and Lombard-street; and Maitland describes it as "the little corner-house." Many persons now living will remember this little corner-house, when it was occupied by a noted lottery-office keeper, and scarcely a passer-by failed to fancy the lucky number that looked upon him with seductive eyes out of that shop-window. When Guy settled here it must have been a capital situation, for the ruins of Sir Thomas Gresham's Exchange had been cleared away, and new dwellings had sprung up with the rapidity which the exigencies of trade never fail to command. Within a year after our Thomas had taken up his position, the second Exchange was

opened with great pomp; and it stood through all the changes and revolutions of thrones and institutions, of laws and commerce, till it was burnt down in 1838.

Placed thus in the very heart of the great commercial operations of London, I can see the shadow of the young bookseller as he sits in his shop amidst his small stock, of the value of two hundred pounds, restless at the want of occupation, and envying the great merchant adventurers congregating in the Exchange, whose ships brought the produce of every land to the port of London. He spreads his new books and his old upon a board in front of his window, now and then soliciting the busy trader who glances at them to buy Mr. Wingate's 'Arithmetic made Easy,' or Mr. Record's 'Grounds of Art,' or Mr. Hawes's 'Short Arithmetic; or, the Old and Tedious Way of Numbering reduced to a New and Brief Method.' He had divinity books, too, chiefly by the famous controversialists who wrote against any approach to the errors of the Church of Rome; and some by their opponents, who were equally hostile to the doctrines of the Non-conforming clergy. Theology was, by far the most exciting topic of those days. Mr. Guy was a good Protestant, and as he sat in his shop, too often unvisited by customers, he meditated frequently upon the large trade that he could command if it were in his power to offer godly people Bibles well printed and cheap. There was no such commodity to be had in England. All the arts associated with the production of books were hampered with privileges and restrictions, and were consequently in a state very inferior to those practised in

some countries abroad under conditions of freedom. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, the right of printing Bibles and Testaments had been common to all printers. Then privilege stepped in, and confined the right to Her Majesty's printer. Similar privileges were granted for law books, for the A B C and the catechism, for psalters and primers, for Latin books used in grammar-schools, for music books, and for almanacs and prognostications. In 1575 the Stationers' Company boldly remonstrated against these privileges, maintaining that the privileged books were sold at excessive prices. When Elizabeth had Stuart successors, the privileges, which had been affairs of Court jobbery, were maintained and extended by that dread of the power of the press which seems inherent in despotic governments. By a decree of the Star Chamber, in 1637, the number of type-founders for the kingdom was limited to four. This restriction was renewed under Charles II. As a natural consequence the English types were not fit for the production of any book besides the lowest ballad or tract, and all the types used in the better English printing-offices were imported from Holland. The duty on paper was not imposed until 1711. But as the impolitic restrictions upon any one branch of an art have a necessary influence upon all its cognate branches, the manufacture of paper in England had become confined to the commonest sorts, chiefly used for wrapping. In 1662 Fuller, in his 'Worthies,' writing of Cambridgeshire, says:—"Paper is entered as a manufacture of this county, because there are mills nigh Sturbridge-fair, where paper was made in

the memory of our fathers. And it seemeth to me a proper conjunction, that seeing Cambridge yieldeth so many good writers, Cambridgeshire should afford paper unto them. Pity the making thereof is disused, considering the vast sums yearly expended in our land for paper out of Italy, France, and Germany, that might be lessened were it made in our nation." It was not only the inferior typographical execution of the English Bibles upon which Thomas Guy meditated, but he well knew that they were full of many gross errors. In 1660 honest Fuller had borne his testimony against this common defect, in his tract of 'Mixt Contemplations.' Under the quaint head of "Fye for Shame," he thus writes:— "Considering with myself the causes of the growth and increase of impiety and profaneness in our land, amongst others this seemeth to me not the least, viz., the late many false and erroneous impressions of the Bible. Now know, what is but carelessness in other books, is impiety in setting forth of the Bible."

Guy, as well as fellow booksellers, saw that a great reformation was needed in this branch of their trade. The patent of King's printer had continued in the family of the Barkers, from the time of Queen Elizabeth to the end of 1665. A monopoly of a century was little calculated to ensure excellence. The Oxford Bibles were chiefly for the use of churches. Maitland relates that at the time when Guy opened his shop "the English Bibles printed in this kingdom being very bad, both in the letter and paper, occasioned divers of the booksellers in this city to encourage the printing thereof in Holland, with

curious types and fine paper, and imported vast numbers of the same, to their no small advantage. Mr. Guy, soon becoming acquainted with this profitable commerce, became a large dealer therein." We may believe that Guy trusted that the Dutch compositors would not print, as was printed in the Bible of 1653, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God." He had learnt from Mr. Selden's 'Table Talk,' that in a Bible printed in the reign of Charles I., the word "not" was left out in the seventh commandment, for which typographical blunder the printers were heavily fined. I can imagine that he would look carefully over the Dutch printer's proofs. The issue of this project is thus recorded:—"But this trade proving not only very detrimental to the public revenue, but likewise to the King's printer, all ways and means were devised to quash the same; which being vigorously put in execution, the booksellers, by frequent seizures and prosecutions, became so great sufferers, that they judged a further pursuit thereof inconsistent with their interest."

Mr. Guy was too prudent a man to persevere in a contest against authorities. If the associated venders of Dutch printed bibles had been able to stand out against the privilege of the King's printer, there was another powerful claimant to the monopoly of circulating the sacred Scriptures. The University of Oxford asserted its claim to provide the English people with Bibles and Common Prayers. It is scarcely necessary for me to enter upon the history of the restrictions under which the two English universities and the King's printer

have so long maintained their monopoly. Thomas Guy was too sagacious a man to resist the pretensions of powers so influential in the counsels of the Stuarts. With a more than common share of ability and perseverance, he finally induced the University of Oxford to contract with him for an assignment of their privilege. Furnishing himself with types from Holland, he set about printing the English Bibles in London, and established a trade which was far more profitable than that of retailing books at the little corner shop in Lombard Street.

The young bookseller in his first two or three years of struggle has maintained his position by the most scrupulous frugality. He has been his own servant, having his homely dinner supplied from a cookshop, and eating it upon his counter. In the scanty notices of his career it is said that he thus dined hastily and unexpensively, "with no other tablecloth than an old newspaper." The relater of this anecdote must have been more familiar with the newspapers of the time of George III. than with those of Charles II. 'The Intelligence' of Roger L'Estrange, and the 'Newes' of the same favoured journalist, were about the size of an ordinary dish, and would have done little to protect Guy's counter from grease and gravy. Of the same apocryphal character may be the relation that he was "as little nice in regard to his apparel" as to his mode of dining. There is one anecdote, however, given as an example of his penurious habits, which has been often quoted. I receive it rather as an example of his decision of character than of his miserly propensities; and I assign the date to his early time of

work and privation, rather than to the days when he was accumulating thousands.

At a Common Council, held in October, 1671, an Act was passed relating to the paving and cleansing of the streets and sewers. All streets within the city of London were to be paved round or causeway-fashion, under the direction of the commissioners for pavements, &c. The foot-pavements were to be provided at the expense of the occupants of each house. The posts which protected the foot-passenger from the carriages of the causeway were an ancient institution, which lasted long after Gay in his 'Trivia' had described them as the defence of the pedestrians. They were set up by authority after the city had recovered its propriety, when the ruins of 1666 had been cleared away. The following extract from the 'Rules, Orders, and Directions' of 1671, "printed in a small book, and delivered to or left for every Householder," may give me some key to an incident in the private life of Thomas Guy:—"That the breadth of six foot at the least from the foundation of the houses in such of the said High Streets which shall be allowed to be posted, shall be paved by the inhabitants or owners with flat or broad stone for the foot passage, unless such parts thereof as shall lie before any gateway, which may be done with square Rag by the said breadth of six foot, upon pain of paying five shillings for every week the same shall be omitted to be done after notice given." It is at this point, when the successful printer and vender of Bibles was about twenty-eight years of age, that I would call up his Shadow, as it appears to me under the one gleam

of romance which lighted for a moment his solitary pursuit of the great purpose of his life.

Customers, wholesale and retail, have found their way to the new Warehouse for the sale of the privileged Oxford Bibles. Mr. Baskett, now the King's printer, has a powerful rival. To evade the royal patent, it will not be necessary for Thomas Guy to print his pocket Bible with foot-notes, which might be cut off when the volume was bound. He sits amongst his stores, musing, with more assurance than Alnaschar of his visions being realised, of the wealth that will flow in from his adroit treaty with the syndics of the Oxford Press. He will not demand the Lord Mayor's daughter in marriage, nor spurn her from him when she has accepted him as her lord. The passion for accumulation has got some possession of him; but if he should become rich, which he is firmly resolved to be, he will not waste his means in extravagant display, or the dissipation of some young men of the city, who ape the vices and follies of the courtiers. What if he should be able to do something towards the support of the hospital in Southwark, which seems to have fallen more and more into neglect and decay, since his boyish time when he has seen many a wretched creature carried within its gates. Sights of misery have been familiar to him during the course of his youth and manhood. He has seen the red cross on many a door during 1665, and has heard the awful midnight cry of "Bring out your dead." He has seen, after the plague has abated, what Mr. Pepys saw, "such begging of beggars." He has seen crowds of the houseless poor—sick, starving, with no

place of refuge—after the catastrophe of 1666. The great hospital of St. Bartholomew flourishes; but its rents, large as they may be, are insufficient to accomplish what was desired when it was founded anew by King Henry VIII., who was "moved thereto with great pity for and towards the relief and succour and help of the poor, aged, sick, lame, and impotent people," described as "lying and going about begging in the common streets of the city of London and suburbs of the same." With a strength of will rarely equalled in real life, he resolves to be rich, and to do some good with his riches.

But Thomas Guy, in coming to this resolution, has an arduous struggle with natural feelings. He is lonely. He has indulged himself with the cost of a female servant, who cooks his frugal meal, and keeps his Holland shirt tidy. But he wants the solace of a household friend. He goes little into society. He dines rarely in his Company's hall. The city dames, according to his observation, are too ambitious of finery. He has once or twice conversed during the banquet at Guildhall with the daughter of a rich stationer, and has found her deplorably ignorant of the commodities in which her father deals. Gradually he begins to think that his own maid-servant is quite as attractive as a citizen's daughter; born of honest parents, religiously disposed, and skilled in cookery and other useful arts. What if this neat-handed Phillis should become his wife! He is sure that he can compel her to regulate his affairs with due economy. She has never wasted money or victuals while in his service. She has professed that implicit obedience

to his will which he requires. He at last makes his proposal, and it is accepted graciously. But there is one danger which the handmaiden has not foreseen. She has not apprehended the possibility of giving dire offence by the slightest manifestation of her own opinion in opposition to that of her master. He has been very cross for several days. He has been fined once for neglecting to pave the footway in front of his shop. He delays to incur an expense which he thinks ought to fall upon the pavement commissioners; but he must yield. The paviors go to work. He watches them narrowly. He has a ground-plan of his own premises, the boundary of which is not very well defined in the frontage. He gives the most minute directions as to the exact point where his portion of the "flat or broad stone" way within the posts should begin and end. The workmen find that a very awkward space is left unpaved. They carry their remonstrances to the incautious maiden within doors, during the absence of her master. She little knows what she is doing when she says, "Do as you wish. Tell him I bade you, and I am sure he will not be angry." The poor girl must accept her destiny, to remain unmarried to the thriving bookseller. The romance of Thomas Guy's life is over. He girds up his loins for a struggle for a plum. But if I see his Shadow aright there is a soft place in his heart, where the memory of that ill-used woman will long abide.

Maitland, who eschews all romance, has not a word of this story, which I find in Nichols. After the relation of the fortunate contract with the University

of Oxford, he thus pursues, in his description of Guy's Hospital, his account of the man he terms "our founder." "Some time after, England being engaged in an expensive War against France, the poor Seamen on board the Royal Navy, for many years instead of Money received Tickets for their Pay, which those necessitous but very useful men were obliged to dispose of at thirty, forty, and sometimes fifty in the hundred discount. Mr. Guy, discovering the sweets of this traffic, became an early dealer therein." The "expensive war against France" acquires a more precise date in the hands of a writer in Mr. Nichols' 'Literary Anecdotes:' "The bulk of his fortune was acquired by purchasing seamen's tickets during Queen Anne's wars, and by South-Sea Stock in the memorable year 1720." The slightest acquaintance with English history will show that the practice of paying seamen by tickets belonged to the time of Charles II. "During Queen Anne's wars" no minister would have dared to resort to such a financial expedient, which had been denounced even by the Parliament of the Restoration. Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, has many notices in his Diary of this practice, which had nearly produced a mutiny in the Fleet. On the 28th September, 1667, he writes, "All the morning at the office, busy upon an Order of Council, wherein they are mightily at a loss what to advise about our discharging of seamen by ticket, there being no money to pay their wages before January." The Government had become alarmed in the previous June, when the English deserters on board the Dutch ships

were reported to say, "We did heretofore fight for tickets, now we fight for dollars;" and when, in the streets of Wapping, the seamen's wives were crying up and down, "This comes of your not paying our husbands, and now your work is undone, or done by hands that understand it not." The 'Diary' of Pepys, from February to July 1668, is full of his anxieties about "the old business of tickets." But there were higher persons in alarm about the interference of Parliament with this practice. On the 14th of February he writes, "I do find the Duke of York himself troubled, and willing not to be troubled with occasions of having his name used among the Parliament; though he himself do declare that he did give directions to Lord Brouncker to discharge the men at Chatham by ticket, and will own it, if the House call for it, but not else." At this period Thomas Guy was still an apprentice. When he entered upon his own little shop, with his capital of two hundred pounds, he had probably other uses for his ready money than to engage in an investment which was very likely to be altogether lost, in a general repudiation of State obligations. There are no distinct traces of the practice of paying seamen by tickets having been revived, even in the time of Charles II. Lord Macaulay indeed says, speaking of the state of the navy, upon the authority of a memorial by Pepys in 1684, "The sailors were paid with so little punctuality, that they were glad to find some usurer who would purchase their tickets at forty per cent. discount." This memorial of Pepys has never been printed; and Lord Macaulay ex-

amined the manuscript in Magdalene College, Cambridge. How far the memorial goes back, we are not informed by the historian. It is scarcely necessary to inquire how long Thomas Guy persisted in tasting "the sweets of this traffic" after he had once engaged in a profitable and honourable business.

But there are a few words in Maitland's narrative which appear to have been overlooked by those who have built the foundations of Guy's fortune upon seamen's tickets. He says, "Mr. Guy, discovering the sweets of this traffic, became *an early dealer therein.*" But he adds something far more significant —"*as well as in other government securities.*" From the Restoration to the Revolution the Government was constantly borrowing. The difficulty of money-making tradesmen, like Guy, was how to invest their savings. There was risk in lending to an unscrupulous Government; but men who were rapidly accumulating—in most cases heaping up riches by spending far less than they acquired—were content to run the risk. In 1692 a National Debt was created by Parliament, and then the process of lending to the State was wonderfully simplified. Guy had probably been an uneasy State creditor under the Government of Charles II. and James II. Under William III. his private interests and his public feeling would have led him willingly to take a portion of that loan of a million which was sanctioned by Act of Parliament. By this measure the funded debt of England was first established. Two years after this memorable era, Thomas Guy was himself in Parliament as one of the Members for Tamworth.

His biography by Maitland points to his parliamentary career. "As he was a man of unbounded charity and universal benevolence, so was he likewise a great patron of liberty and the rights of his fellow-subjects; which, to his great honour, he strenuously asserted in divers Parliaments, whereof he was a Member." I can trace his name in every list of the House of Commons, from the third Parliament of William III. (1695) to the close of the first Parliament of Anne (1707). Whatever public services he might have rendered towards the Whig Government, I presume it was not "by purchasing seamen's tickets during Queen Anne's wars."

It was at this latter time that Guy appears to have been more occupied with his plans of benevolence than with political contentions. During the half century which followed the period I have assigned for his transitory dream of domestic happiness, he seems to have accumulated riches with some consistent purpose of usefully employing them. It is probable that, very early, a stimulus to exertion had arisen in his resolves, steadily carried out, to dedicate his gains to charitable uses. It is for this that he resists all the attractions of City honours. The prospective dignity of Lord Mayor has no charms for him, so he pays the customary fine of 500*l.* to avoid the office of Sheriff. Dunton, as we have seen, records that he had built almshouses in 1705. Two years later he built three new wards to St. Thomas's Hospital, besides being a regular benefactor of 100*l.* a year. The prosperous course of his financial operations, after this period, has been detailed by Mait-

land. It was a very simple and straightforward proceeding for the investment of his accumulations. "In the year 1710, when the debt of the navy was increased to divers millions, an Act of Parliament was made to provide for the payment of that and other men's dues from the Government, by erecting the South Sea Company, into which the creditors of divers branches of the National Debt were empowered to subscribe the several sums due to them from the public." He goes on to state that Mr. Guy, being possessed of such securities to the amount of many thousand pounds, subscribed the same into the South Sea Company, it being the condition that the subscribers should receive an annual interest of six per cent. upon their respective subscriptions, until the same should be discharged by Parliament. During the subsequent ten years, when he was a fundholder at a moderate rate of interest—not a stockjobber—he made large benefactions to the Stationers' Company for poor members, and to Christ's Hospital. In 1720 came the culminating point of his prosperity. We borrow Maitland's account, which is simple and clear enough, to show how Guy profited by the scheme proposed to Parliament by the South Sea Company, for reducing some of the public debts by increasing their capital. "It no sooner received the sanction of Parliament than the national creditors from all parts came crowding to subscribe into the said company the several sums due to them from the Government, by which great run one hundred pounds of the company's stock that before was sold at one hundred and twenty pounds (at which time Mr. Guy

was possessed of forty-five thousand and five hundred pounds of the said stock), gradually arose to above one thousand and fifty pounds. Mr. Guy, wisely considering that the great rise of the stock was owing to the iniquitous management of a few, prudently began to sell out his stock at about three hundred (for that which probably at first did not cost him above fifty or sixty pounds), and continued selling till it arose to about six hundred, when he disposed of the last of his property in the said company." It thus appears that Mr. Guy's "gains" during this season of financial madness were not produced by buying at a low price and selling at a high price. He was an original large holder of South Sea Stock, and he followed the course of the market in wisely selling out at the right season. His decision of character would lead him to determine this critical question, which so many speculators fail to solve. When Sir Robert Walpole sold out at a profit of 1000 per cent., the rich bookseller might safely follow his lead in private as well as public affairs. He does not appear to have been a South Sea Director, or in any way a promoter of the scheme upon which was founded "the most enormous fabric of delusion that was ever raised amongst an industrious, thrifty, and prudent people." Thomas Guy was amongst the few sagacious ones who profited by the common phrensy. His fortune had arisen out of the slow accumulations of a long period of industry. When he was seventy-six years of age, there came a great and unexpected accession of wealth. The wonderful increase produced by the sale of the stock which he had regarded as a safe investment, "occa-

sioned," says Malcolm, "those the best acquainted with his affairs to aver that, by the execution of the pernicious South Sea scheme, Mr. Guy got more money within the space of three months than what the erecting, furnishing, and endowing his hospital amounted to." The building cost nearly nineteen thousand pounds. The endowment by him amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand pounds. He had the satisfaction of knowing that his gains had been worthily applied, when he saw his hospital roofed in before his death in 1724.

I have been desirous of defending Thomas Guy against the charge of having made his great riches chiefly by usury and stock-jobbing, because I believe that the printing and sale of Bibles for nearly half a century would have secured for him very large accumulations. Let me look a little more particularly at this question.

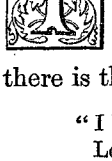
There is preserved, in the handwriting of Christopher Barker, in 1582, 'A Note of the offices and other special licences for printing granted by her Majesty, with a conjecture of their valuation.' This printer to the Queen says that the whole Bible requires so great a cost, that his predecessors kept the realm twelve years without venturing a single edition; but that he had desperately adventured to print four in a year and a half, expending about 3000*l.*, to the certain ruin of his wife and family if he had died in the time. Of these four editions, three were in folio, and one in quarto. The sale of the folios would necessarily be limited by the cost, in the way that the same patentee complains of as to his Book of Common Prayer, "which few or none do

buy except the minister." During the ninety years which elapsed between the date of this letter, and that period which I may assign for the opening of the Oxford Bible Warehouse by Guy, there had probably been very small competition for the sale of the Holy Scriptures between the King's printer and the two Universities. The Church Bible was well printed by each; but the smaller Bible for private use was as dear as it was ill-printed. The demand by the laity produced the attempt of associated booksellers to print the Bible in Holland. The attempt failed; and if Guy, or some other spirited bookseller, had not stepped in to render the Oxford privilege an active principle, instead of a dead letter, as regarded the general circulation of the Bible, the same state of things would have gone on, as that over which the King's printer lamented in 1682, namely, that some books which partially supplied the place of the Common Prayer Book were in general use.

It required no acquaintance with Christopher Barker's letter to satisfy Thomas Guy that a cheap book sold largely would be "a profitable copy;" that where Field's great Bible would sell one copy, a hundred common Bibles might be sold at a tenth of its price. Guy called forth a real competition between two privileged bodies, and this neutralised the evil of their monopoly. In the present day the same limited competition has produced a cheapness which excites the wonder of those who are not aware of what results can be produced in the price of books by an universal demand.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN DUNTON.



N a copy of verses prefixed to 'The Life and Errors' of John Dunton — which poem is entitled 'The Author's Speaking Picture, drawn by Himself, in 1705,' there is the following couplet:—

> "I love to know the inside of a man,
> Let who will gaze o' th' shadow of him then."

I must be content to gaze on the shadow of this man, without too much regard to his moral or intellectual peculiarities. These procured for him the name of a "lunatick" among his contemporaries. Warburton described him as "an auction bookseller and an abusive scribbler;" and the elder D'Israeli notices him as "a cracked-brain scribbling bookseller, who boasted he had a thousand projects, fancied he had methodised six hundred, and was ruined by the fifty he executed." And yet, in spite of all this, I must call up the shadow of John Dunton to say something for himself, and to usher in other shadows of his contemporaries—booksellers, printers, authors, journalists, licensers of the press—around whom he has gathered many illustrations of the literary history of the time from James II. to

George II., which I should in vain look for in the graver records of a sober bibliographer. So I wade, for the third or fourth time, through a volume of seven hundred pages, vilely printed upon the most wretched paper, whose title-page is itself emblematic of the "inside of the man," as setting forth not only his "life and errors," but his "idea of a new life;" his "discoveries made in his travels already, and in his private conversation at home;" together with "the lives and characters of a thousand persons now living in London, &c." This volume, "written by himself in solitude," was published by R. Malthus, in 1705, and was reprinted by Mr. John Bowyer Nichols, in 1817. John Dunton's "speech is like a tangled chain, nothing impaired, but all disordered;" so I will endeavour to arrange some of its more interesting portions into some method.

From an early age to his ninth year, there was a boy growing up almost as an orphan, in a school at Dungrove, near Chesham, in Buckinghamshire. His father was born at Little Missenden, in the same county, of which parish two previous John Duntons had been the ministers. He records that he was born on the 14th of May, 1659. His father was then rector of Graffham in Huntingdonshire. Losing his wife when his only child was an infant, the father went away to Ireland, with the resolution not to marry again for seven years. Meanwhile the little boy was left to strangers, appearing by his own account to have learnt little, and to have led an idle life, playing on the pleasant banks of the Chess, and rambling amongst the Chiltern hills. His father

returning to England after his long exile, was presented to the living of Aston Clinton. He then married a second time, and sent for his little son home, to superintend his education, with a view to his becoming a faithful preacher of the doctrines that had come down from the old Puritans, but were growing into disrepute after the restoration of the Stuarts and the re-establishment of episcopacy. He was doomed to disappointment. Young John, describing himself at the age of fourteen as being "wounded by a silent passion for a virgin in my father's house," says, "my father tried all the methods with me that could be thought of, in order to reconcile my mind to the love of learning, but all of them proved useless and ineffectual. My thoughts were all unbent and dissolved in the affairs of love." What he calls his "unsettled mercurial humour," destroyed his father's hopes that he might be able to transmit "the priesthood to his own posterity." He learnt Latin, but the difficulties of the Greek quite broke all his resolutions. So the worthy man, seeing that his son's inclinations did not lead him to learning, "thought to make it his interest to be a friend to learning and the Muses." He was to be apprenticed to a London bookseller. He was now, he says, "only to traffic with the outside, the shell, and the casks of learning." His intended master, Mr. Parkhurst, "a religious and a just man," was kind to the youth upon trial, but having gratified his curiosity, John took horse to Aston Clinton without leave. His father sent him back again, with a kind and sensible letter of excuse, and so he was bound

apprentice. Better thoughts came upon him, and "from that very time I began to love books to the same excess that I had hated them before." His father died in 1676, giving young John his dying counsels "to know, fear, love, obey, and serve God, your Creator and Deliverer, as he hath revealed Himself, through His Son, by the Spirit, in His Holy Word." Amidst all his "errors," the thought of his father's instruction seems to have had some influence upon his wayward nature, and to have kept him from greater evils than the misfortunes which sprang from his instability. The bookseller's apprentice had then five more years to serve. These he accomplished without any other outbreak, beyond that of taking a prominent part in a political movement of Whig apprentices against the Tory; and, when his apprenticeship was just expiring, he "invited a hundred apprentices to celebrate a funeral for it, though it was no more than a youthful piece of vanity." He was soon a bookseller on his own account, occupying "half a shop, a warehouse, and a fashionable chamber." The young man had inherited some property, which might be available for his business. His excellent father, amongst other counsels, had advised him to use all possible prudence in the choice of a wife, further exhorting him to keep something more solid than investments in publishing speculations. "Sell not," he said, "any part of your estate in land, if either your wife's portion, or your borrowing of money upon interest, may conveniently serve to set up your trade." "Even," said the cautious father, "if you shall, by some remarkable

providence, meet with a wife of a considerable estate, you may, by her portion, set up your trade without mortgaging of your land." John Dunton had thus some present command of capital, which he was in a fair way to improve into a fortune, or, more probably, to dissipate. "Printing," he says, "was now the uppermost in my thoughts, and hackney authors began to ply me with *specimens* as earnestly, and with as much passion and concern, as the watermen do passengers with oars and scullers." He was, however, for a time, prudent; confined his business of publishing to the works of Nonconformist ministers, to whom his name was a recommendation. His first venture was a work by the Reverend Thomas Doolittle. His mode of managing this volume shows how in the primitive days, when there was little ready money, and credit was not easily attainable for a beginner, there was a good understanding amongst booksellers, which had much of the simplicity of barter. "This book fully answered my end; for, exchanging it through the whole trade, it furnished my shop with all sorts of books saleable at that time." He says, "I would endeavour to penetrate, as far as possible, into the mysteries of my trade." Some of the publishing mysteries of that time he seems to have eschewed. "A man should be furnished with an honest policy, if he intends to set out in the world now-a-days. And this is no less necessary in a bookseller, than in any other tradesman, for in that way there are plots and counterplots, and a whole army of hackney authors, that keep their grinders moving by the travail of their

pens. These gormandisers will eat you the very life out of a copy so soon as ever it appears; for, as the times go, *original* and *abridgment* are almost reckoned as necessary as man and wife; so that I am really afraid a bookseller and a good conscience will shortly grow some strange thing in the earth." Dunton, I trust, was preserved from some of the dangers of his susceptible nature, as well as from the temptations of commercial life, by marrying into a religious family. He fell in love at church with Elizabeth Annesley, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Annesley, an eminent preacher amongst the Nonconformists. By marrying this lady he became the brother-in-law of Samuel Wesley, the father of the famous John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. The courtship appears to have been conducted on Dunton's part with as much poetical as religious fervour. Plain Elizabeth was not sufficiently lofty for his impassioned letters. His mistress was the "lovely Iris," and he, "poor languishing Philarete." In spite of these affectations they were united in 1682, and Dr. Annesley preached the marriage sermon. "Dear Iris" gave an early specimen of her prudence and diligence. She was "bookseller and cash-keeper" at Dunton's shop, the Black Raven, in Gracechurch-street, and he honestly admits, "managed all my affairs for me, and left me entirely to my own rambling and scribbling humours." He soon found, or made, an occasion for the indulgence of his vagrant humour. "There came an universal damp upon trade by the defeat of Monmouth in the West; and at this time, having 500*l.*

owing to me in New England, I began to think it worth my while to make a voyage of it thither." Landing at Boston, after a voyage of four months, he consoled dear Iris by sending her sixty letters by one ship. Half of his venture in books had been cast away in the Downs. He was away nearly a year, trafficking without much profit, for he says of the inhabitants of Boston, "he that trades with them may get promises enough, but their payments come late." He has more to tell about his platonic friendships with maids and widows, than of his dealings with the four booksellers of Boston, to whom he was "as welcome as sour ale in summer." On his return to England he found his affairs in a bad condition, and sought to mend them by a voyage to Holland.

At this period the young bookseller's capital was evidently much wasted already, by improvident speculations, by his unstable habits, and by becoming surety for summer friends. Yet he boasts that of the six hundred books he printed during his career, he had only to repent of seven. One project was a decided success, and has associated his name with the discovery of the power of periodical publication, as applied to other subjects than news. Of 'The Athenian Mercury,' the first number appeared on March 17, 1690. With all his versatility, John Dunton kept on this penny tract, of a single leaf, till February, 1696, when he proposed to publish his 'Mercuries' in quarterly volumes. He decided upon this course, "as the coffee-houses had the Votes every day, and nine newspapers every week." He designed, however, to resume his weekly half-sheet

"as soon as the glut of news is a little over." In 1696 William III., after his glorious campaign, had to struggle against the plots of St. Germains; and the nation, amidst the discovery and punishment of treason, had little time for the solution by the "Athenians" of "the nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious." Regarding the nineteen volumes of the 'Athenian Mercury' as the precursors of a revolution in the entire system of our lighter literature, which turned pamphlets and broadsides into magazines and miscellanies, I may call up the shadow of John Dunton, to linger a while on the scene with his "Athenian Society," which he avers "had their first meeting in my brain." He had three associates in this Society,—Richard Sault, a Cambridge theologian; Samuel Wesley; and the Rev. Dr. John Norris. They contrived to persuade the world that they were "the only knowing men of Europe," by keeping their names "religiously secret." In 'The History of the Athenian Society,' by one of the members (published in 'The Athenian Oracle,' a selection from the periodical work) it is maintained that "England has the glory of giving rise to two of the noblest designs that the art of man is capable of inventing—the Royal Society and the Athenian Society." Of the latter, the aim is "to advance all knowledge, and diffuse a general learning through the many, and by that civilize more now in a few years, than Athens itself did of old during the ages it flourished."

Of the success of his little periodical, and of the fame which it brought to him, Dunton was naturally

proud. Poems in its honour "were written by the chief wits of the age." The Marquis of Halifax perused it; and "the late Sir William Temple, a man of clear judgment and wonderful penetration, was pleased to honour me with frequent letters and questions." Another record is more curious: "Mr. Swift, a country gentleman, sent an ode to the Athenian Society, which, being an ingenious poem, was prefixed to the fifth supplement of the 'Athenian Mercury.'" This was the Ode of which Johnson speaks: "I have been told that Dryden, having perused these verses, said, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet;' and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden." The poem is to be found in all editions of Swift. We are startled when we read,—

> "Pardon, ye great unknown, and far-exalted men,
> The wild excursions of a youthful pen."

But how far more surprising is it to find Jonathan Swift, the haughtiest of mankind, sounding "the very base string of humility," in his letter "to the Athenian Society," dated from Moor Park, February 14, 1691: "For the Ode enclosed, I have sent it to a person of very great learning and honour, and since to some others, the best of my acquaintance (to which I thought very proper to inure it for a greater light), and they have all been pleased to tell me that they are sure it will not be unwelcome, and that I should beg the honour of you to let it be printed before your next volume (which I think is soon to be published), it being so usual amongst books of any great value

among poets; and, before its seeing the world, I submit it wholly to the correction of your pens. I entreat, therefore, one of you would descend so far as to write two or three lines to me of your pleasure upon it; which, as I cannot but expect from gentlemen who have so well shown upon so many occasions that greatest character of scholars, in being favourable to the ignorant, so I am sure nothing at present can more highly oblige me, or make me happier." Ingenuous young Secretary of Sir William Temple, how much hadst thou to forget of the "pride which licks the dust," and to learn in the world's school of ambition and insolence, between 1691 and 1711! When Harley promised thee a bishopric for doing the dirtiest offices that a great intellect ever stooped to, thou would'st have made short work with the "devils of Grub-street rogues," such as John Dunton and his Athenians.

During the course of publication of the 'Athenian Mercury,' Dunton was relieved from some of his early difficulties, by coming "into possession of a considerable estate," by the decease of his cousin. "The world," he says, "now smiled on me. I sailed with wind and tide, and had humble servants enough among the Stationers, Booksellers, Printers, and Binders." Honours awaited him. "Now the Master and Assistants of the 'Company of Stationers began to think me sufficient to wear a livery;" and he paid his livery-fine of twenty pounds. The business of bookselling had, upon the accession of William and Mary, attained that freedom which had been denied to authors and publishers by Charles I., Charles II.,

and James II. "The Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," so nobly advocated by Milton, was established, although some restraint upon the Press still remained till 1694. Dunton's "character of the several licensers with whom I have had concerns" offers a curious peep behind the scenes. Sir Roger L'Estrange is the first on the list, and he is not simply dismissed with telling the world that his sting is gone, but is thus characterized:—"A man that betrays his religion and country in pretending to defend it; that was made Surveyor of the Press, and would wink at unlicensed books if the printer's wife would but smile on him." "Mr. Fraser," Dunton says, "was our chief Licenser for several years. He licensed for me the 'Athenian Mercuries,' 'The Works of the Learned,' 'The Royal Voyage,' and such a numerous company of other books, as advanced his fees, for bare licensing, to thirty pounds per annum, which I paid him for several years together. . . . . No man was better skilled in the mystery of winning upon the hearts of booksellers, nor were the Company of Stationers ever blessed with an honester Licenser." He names several others, always with commendation. John had no doubt learnt "the mystery of winning upon the hearts" of the Licensers. There was a jackal of these lions in the path of publishers who is thus described:—"Mr. Robert Stephens is 'Messenger to the Press,' as well as a printer. I know Robin has many enemies, that grunt at him (and perhaps they have reason for it); but if I will praise the bridge that I went over, I must say he never did me the least injury; for, if I printed a book that had

no license, I took such care to dazzle his eyes that he could not see it; and Robin will be as true to his friend, when there is a fellow-feeling in the case, as any man in the world, which is a rare quality in a man that lives by *informing*." The licensing system, with all its tyranny and corruption, had one advantage. It did something to protect the copyright in books from piracy. The Licensing Acts and Proclamations prohibited the printing of any book without the consent of the owner, as also without a license. In the interval between the period when licenses for the press had ceased, and the passing of the Copyright Act of the 8th of Anne, there was no effectual protection for literary property. During those twenty years, the men abundantly flourished who are described by Addison in the 'Tatler' as "a set of wretches we authors call pirates, who print any book, poem, or sermon, as soon as it appears in the world, in a smaller volume, and sell it, as all other thieves do stolen goods, at a cheaper rate." Dunton has drawn the character of one of this tribe: "Mr. Lee, in Lombard-street. Such a pirate, such a cormorant, was never before. Copies, books, men, ships, all was one; he held no propriety, right or wrong, good or bad, till at last he began to be known; and the booksellers, not enduring so ill a man among them to disgrace them, spewed him out, and off he marched for Ireland, where he acted as felonious Lee, as he did in London." There he might safely pirate. That trade flourished, more or less, till the Union of 1801 put an end to it.

Dunton's picture of "felonious Lee" is quite an

exception to the usual sugared style in which he portrays his professional contemporaries. Roger North described the booksellers of Little Britain as "knowing and conversable men, with whom, for the sake of bookish knowledge, the greatest wits were pleased to converse." But with John Dunton, many of them are almost miracles of talent and learning. One is "a man of very quick parts;" of another it is affirmed, that "for sense, wit, and good-humour there are but few can equal, and none can exceed him." One is "very much conversant in the sacred writings;" a second "speaks French and Latin with a great deal of fluency and ease;" a third is "familiarly acquainted with all the books that are extant in any language." It is astonishing how many are remarkable for the beauty of their persons—their eyes "brisk and sparkling;" of "graceful aspect;" of "a lovely proportion, exceedingly well made." A valued friend who, like myself, has found something more than folly in Dunton's 'Life and Errors,' says "never certainly, before or since, were all the graces, both of mind and body, so generally diffused among any class of men as among these old London booksellers."* I must not dwell upon these "words of such sweet breath composed," but look a little further into this historian of "the trade," to note down some of its peculiarities at the end of the seventeenth century, as developed in some of his characters.

First, let me catch a glimpse of the localities in which these busy bees buzzed and made their honey.

* G. L. Craik, in Knight's 'London,' Vol. V. No. CXV.

About twenty years after Dunton published his volume, Macky, the author of a 'Journey through England,' traced out their general distribution through the metropolis: "The booksellers of Antient books in all languages are in Little Britain and Paternoster-row; those for Divinity and Classics on the north side of St. Paul's Cathedral; Law, History, and Plays about Temple Bar; and the French Booksellers in the Strand. It seems, then, that the bookselling business has been gradually resuming its original situation near this Cathedral ever since the beginning of George I., while the neighbourhood of Duck-lane and Little Britain has been proportionally falling into disuse." Little Britain, once the grand emporium of books, we thus learn, was going down in 1724; and was probably then chiefly tenanted by those called by Roger North "demi-booksellers," who furnished "half a shop which serves for the sign of a bookseller rather than a real one." He is hard upon this tribe: "It is wretched to consider what pickpocket work, with help of the press, these demi-booksellers make. They crack their brains to find out selling subjects, and keep hirelings in garrets, at hard meat, to write and correct by the great; and so puff up an octavo to a sufficient thickness, and there is six shillings current for an hour and a half's reading, and perhaps never to be read or looked upon after." With the aid of Dunton I may behold the Shadow of many an entire or demi-bookseller, sitting under his sign in other places than Little Britain and Paternoster-row, than St. Paul's Churchyard, Temple Bar, and the Strand. They start up in the New

Exchange and in Westminster Hall, in the Savoy and in the Inner Temple. They are, in some sort, ubiquitous. Mr. Benjamin Harris—who in King Charles's reign had the satisfaction, as he stood on the pillory, to have his wife standing by his side to defend her husband against the mob—was the companion of Dunton as they travelled from Bury Fair. Mr. Shrewsbury—who "merits the name of universal bookseller, and is a great ornament to the Stationers' Company"—made our imitative John free of Sturbridge Fair; "he, perhaps, is the only bookseller who understands fair-keeping to any advantage." Mr. Larkin "keeps Bristol Fair every year, and is a very thriving man."

"A bookseller," says Dunton, "if he is a man of any capacity and observation, can tell best what to go upon, and what has the best prospect of success." The best book is not always that which "has the best prospect of success;" and thus even booksellers "of capacity and observation" often make grave mistakes on deciding "what is best to go upon." Authors are apt to hold the experience of "the trade" in some contempt; and, perhaps in a greater extent, "the trade" is apt to regard the æsthetic theories of authors as the dreams of vanity. In Dunton's characters of his contemporary brethren we have evidence enough that the booksellers of that time were practical men, who published many excellent works which still hold a place in our libraries. Some went the safest way to work, by cultivating the friendship of writers of reputation. Thus "Mr. Wellington has the intimate acquaintance of several

excellent pens, and therefore can never want copies." Mr. Richard Chiswell "has not been known to print either a bad book or on bad paper. He is admirably well qualified for his business, and knows how to value a copy according to its worth; witness the purchase he has made of Archbishop Tillotson's octavo sermons." Mr. Knapton "shews by his purchasing of Dampier's Voyages that he knows how to value a good copy." Mr. Tonson "is himself a very good judge of persons and authors." Awnsham and John Churchill, "two booksellers and brothers of an universal wholesale trade," had the great merit and the provident virtue of liberality: "They never starve an undertaking to save charges." Integrity, in a business of such publicity, was as necessary to success as judgment and prudence. "Mr. Robert Clavel is a great dealer, and has deservedly gained himself the reputation of a just man. Doctor Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, used to call him 'the honest bookseller.'" Others, by associating themselves with Party in Church or State, made fast friends, who considered a publisher's success as essentially connected with their own fame and advancement. Mr. Thomas Parkhurst, mentioned by Dunton as "my honoured master," is "the most eminent Presbyterian bookseller in the three kingdoms, and now chosen master of the Company of Stationers." Mr. Thomas Bennet, "very much devoted to the Church, has a considerable trade in Oxford, and prints for Dr. South and the most eminent Conformists." Atterbury was his great friend and patron, and preached his funeral sermon in 1706. His religious and moral qualities

are eloquently described. 'His qualities as a bookseller are worthy of emulation:—"I need not say how perfect a master he was of all the business of that useful profession wherein he had engaged himself; you know it well; and the great success his endeavours met with sufficiently proves it. Nor could the event well be otherwise; for his natural abilities were very good, and his industry exceeding great; and the evenness and probity of his temper not inferior to either of them. Besides, he had one peculiar felicity (which carried in it some resemblance of a great Christian perfection), that he was entirely contented and pleased with his lot; loving his employment for its own sake, as he hath often said, and so as to be willing to spend the rest of his life in it, though he were not, if that could be supposed, to reap any further advantages from it. Not but that the powers of his mind were equal to much greater tasks. But his own inclinations were rather to confine himself to his own business, and be serviceable to Religion and Learning in the way in which God's Providence had seemed more particularly to direct him, and in which it had so remarkably blessed him." Special branches of publishing attracted some of the most successful of "the trade." Thomas Guy founded his fortune upon Bibles. The Ballards, father and son, carried on their business in school-books and Divinity during nearly the whole of the eighteenth century. Dunton says of Samuel, the elder: "He is a young bookseller in Little Britain; but is grown man in body now, but more in mind." He died in 1761. The younger, Edward, was the

last bookseller in Little Britain, dying in 1796, at the age of eighty-eight, in the same house in which he was born. I can scarcely resist the desire to call up the Shadow of this old man, to relate the changes which he had witnessed in his professional experience during the reigns of the three Georges. But such a prologue would be too long; and probably Little Britain, going to decay, was not the fittest elevation for a bird's-eye view of a profession which had spread not only over all the capital, but had established itself in the remotest parts of the kingdom.

A few of Dunton's eccentric stars are worth a passing notice. Of Mr. Richard Crouch he says, "He has melted down the best of our English histories into twelvepenny books, which are filled with wonders, varieties, and curiosities." Mr. William Miller "had the largest collection of stitched books of any man in the world, and could furnish the clergy, at a dead lift, with a printed sermon on any text or occasion." Mr. William Goodwin, who prints the Votes of the House of Commons and is Dr. Sherlock's bookseller, dabbles sometimes in humbler things: "Mr. William Rogers, Mr. Harris, and myself, were once partners with him in printing some dying speeches." One—of whom posterity has taken no notice as "the most ingenious bard (of a bookseller) in London"—was great in his professional line: "For forming of titles commend me to Herbert Walwyn; for I could give an instance in which he exceeded a club of wits in that nice affair." Let me not pass over Mrs. Tacy Sowles, an eminent Quaker. "She is both a printer as well as a bookseller, and the daughter of one; and

understands her trade very well, being a good compositor herself." Dunton dismisses the country booksellers with brevity as regards individuals, but with a sweeping commendation, which it may be hoped is deserved by their successors, now multiplied twenty-fold: "Of three hundred booksellers now trading in country towns, I know not of one knave or a blockhead amongst them all."

Book-auctioneers come in for the notice of Dunton; "The famous Mr. Edward Millington was originally a bookseller, which he left off, being better cut out for an auctioneer. He had a quick wit and a wonderful fluency of speech. There was usually as much comedy in his 'once, twice, thrice!' as can be met with in a modern play. 'Where,' said Millington, 'is your generous flame for learning? Who but a sot or a blockhead would have money in his pocket and starve his brains?' Though I suppose he had but a round of jests, Dr. Cave, once bidding too leisurely for a book, says Millington, 'Is this your Primitive Christianity?' alluding to a book the honest Doctor had published under that title." Book-auctions, at the time when John Dunton was an apprentice, were just coming into vogue. Dr. Dibdin gives an address 'To the Reader,' prefixed to a catalogue of books offered for public sale in the year 1676, which he says is the earliest auction catalogue he has met with. This address thus commences: "It hath not been usual here in England to make *sale of books by way of auction, or who will give most for them*; but it having been practised in other countries to the advantage both of buyers and sellers, it was therefore

conceived (for the encouragement of learning) to publish the sale of these books this manner of way." * If in a few years book-auctions were common in London, they were rare in the country. Ralph Thoresby, in his Diary, has described "the first that ever was at this town"—Leeds—when a bookseller from Sheffield was the auctioneer. It was in the evening of the 7th January, 1693, that "the large chamber, being overcrowded with the press of people, in an instant sunk down about a foot at one end; the main beam breaking gave so terrible a thunder-like crack, and the floor yielding below their feet, the people set up such a hideous noise, apprehending the fall of the whole house, at least the sinking of the room (which, in all probability, had been the death of most present), as was most doleful and astonishing, though I, sitting upon the long table by the books, was not at first apprehensive of the danger; but being informed by a friend of the imminent danger, I hasted out with what expedition I could." Dunton, with his customary versatility, turned from publishing to book-auctioneering, and in 1698 was busy in Dublin with a cargo of books. In an address "to the wise, learned, and studious gentlemen of the kingdom of Ireland," he says: "Though the summer be a time for rambling, and the season of the year invite all men abroad that love to see foreign countries; yet it was not this alone, but the good acceptance the way of sale of auction has met with from all lovers of books, that encouraged me to bring to this kingdom of Ireland a general

* Bibliomania, p. 305.

collection of the most valuable pieces in Divinity, History, Philosophy, Law, Physic, Mathematics, Horsemanship, Merchandise, Limning, Military Discipline, Heraldry, Music, Fortification, Fireworks, Husbandry, Gardening, Romances, Novels, Poems, Plays, Bibles, and School-books, that have been printed in England since the dreadful Fire in London in 1666, to this present time." After staying in Ireland six months, having had many quarrels with the booksellers, which he relates in a tract called 'The Dublin Scuffle,' he goes home with great complacency. "A worthy member of the House of Commons did me the honour to say, 'that I had been, by this undertaking, a great benefactor to this country.' And no longer than yesterday a clergyman told Mr. Penny, an English gentleman, 'that I had done more service to learning, by my three auctions, than any one single man that had come into Ireland these hundred years.'"

Poor Dunton was, by this time, involved in commercial difficulties. Over-printing had brought him to grief, as it has done many others who speculate in "copies." There is a quaint notice of one of his customers which is suggestive: "Having characterised the stationers that supplied my printers with paper, it is fit the stationer to whom I sold all my waste-paper should bring up the rear. And this leads me to characterise my neighbour Tyson, in Redcross-street, of whom I never bought, but sold (the more is the pity) many hundred reams of 'Tigurine Liturgy,' 'Edict of Nantes,' and other books that my friends had forgot to ask for." Before he commenced his

'Life and Errors,' he had ceased to be a bookseller. But he is an indefatigable scribbler. The success of 'The Tatler' in 1709 seems to have excited his ambition to rival the paper which Steele and Addison had carried into a far more exalted region of literature than 'The' News Letter' and 'The Post Boy,' nd even Defoe's 'Review.' In the original folio edition of 'The Tatler,' No. 144, I find this wonderful advertisement of a new Journal, also issued by John Morphew. As his imprint is continued through the whole series of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff's two hundred and seventy-one half-sheets, Steele appears not to have been offended at his printer's association with a noted rival:—

"Just published, A Weekly Paper, entitled Athenian News; or Dunton's Oracle: To be continued every Tuesday and Saturday, in 3000 distinct Posts, entitled, The Merry-Post, the Philosophick-Post, and so on to 3000 Posts, 30 of which complete a Volume. To each of these Posts will be added, The Casuistical-Post; or, Athenian Mercury; resolving all nice and curious questions in Prose or Verse. Numb. I. The Subject this Time is, Dunton's Post; or, A Dying Farewell to this Life."

Swift, in his more than party-malignity against his old friend Steele, has preserved the name of Dunton "like a fly in amber," to give a sharper point to his bitter irony. Two-and-twenty years had passed since the secretary of Sir William Temple had addressed the writers of 'The Athenian Mercury' as "great unknown and far-exalted men." Thus the ablest tool of Harley and Bolingbroke writes in 1713:—

"Among the present writers on the Whig side, I can recollect but *three* of any great distinction, which are 'The Flying Post,' Mr. Dunton, and the author

of 'The Crisis' [Steele]. The first of these seems to have been much sunk in reputation since the sudden retreat of the only true, genuine, original author, Mr. Ridpath, who is celebrated by 'The Dutch Gazetteer' as one of *the best pens in England.* Mr. Dunton hath been longer and more conversant in books than any of the three, as well as more voluminous in his productions: however, having employed his studies in so great a variety of other subjects, he hath, I think, but lately turned his genius to politics. His famous tract, entitled 'Neck or Nothing,' must be allowed to be the shrewdest piece, and written with the most spirit of any which hath appeared from that side since the change of the ministry. It is, indeed, a most cutting satire upon the Lord Treasurer and Lord Bolingbroke; and I wonder none of our friends ever undertook to answer it. I confess I was at first of the same opinion with several good judges, who from the style and manner suppose it to have issued from the sharp pen of the Earl of Nottingham; and I am still apt to think it might receive his Lordship's last hand. The third and principal of this triumvirate is the author of 'The Crisis,' who, although he must yield to 'The Flying Post' in knowledge of the world and skill in politics, and to Mr. Dunton in keenness of satire and variety of reading, hath yet other qualities enough to denominate him a writer of a superior class to either, provided he would a little regard the propriety and disposition of his words, consult the grammatical part, and get some information on the subject he intends to handle." *

* 'Public Spirit of the Whigs.'

Poor John Dunton! He receives this banter as serious praise, which proves that "the Reverend and Learned Dr. Jonathan Swift, though a great Jacobite," clears him from "the undeserved slander of being crazed in his intellectuals." Vain old bookseller! An age of poverty and dire wretchedness was before you when you mistook irony for admiration. You did not make hay when the sun was shining, and now it is dreary night with you. But you still look back with more than complacency upon your multifarious labours. In an appeal to King George I., which you call your 'Dying Groans from the Fleet Prison,' or last shift for life,' you claim to have had "the most distinguished share" in bringing about "the general deliverance" accomplished by the accession of the House of Brunswick. You appeal to the King's compassion for your miseries, wants, and services, "the Pretender having sworn that John Dunton is the first man he will hang at Tyburn if ever he ascends the British throne, for his having writ forty books to prove him a Popish impostor, and all his adherents either fools, knaves, or madmen."

CHAPTER III.

JACOB TONSON.

IT is the second week of September, the year 1666. At his shop-door in Holborn, beneath the time-honoured emblem of his profession, the particoloured pole, stands Mr. Jacob Tonson, barber-surgeon. He looks earnestly and sorrowfully at the dense canopy of smoke that hangs over the east. The fire that had destroyed more than half of London is still smouldering. Fragments of burning paper still fall upon the causeway, as the remains of the books that were stowed in St. Faith's, under Paul's, are stirred by the wind. Mr. Tonson is troubled. He has friends amongst the booksellers in the ruined City; and occasional customers who have come thence to be trimmed, with beards of a se'nnight's growth, tell him that these traders are most of them undone.

A month has passed since the fire broke out. The wealthy are finding house-room in Westminster and Southwark, and in streets of the City which the flames have not reached. The poor are still, many of them, abiding in huts and tents in Moorfields and St. George's Fields, and on the hills leading to Highgate. Some of the great thoroughfares may now be traversed. Mr. Tonson will venture forth to see the

condition of his Company's Hall. With his second son, Jacob, holding his hand, he makes his way to Mugwell Street. Barber Surgeons' Hall has sustained some injury; but the Theatre, built by Inigo Jones, which is the pride of the Company, has not been damaged. He shows his son Holbein's great picture of the Company receiving their charter from Henry VIII., and expatiates upon the honour of belonging to such a profession. Young Jacob does not seem much impressed by the paternal enthusiasm. The blood-letting and tooth-drawing are not more attractive to him than the shaving, which latter operation his father deputes to his apprentices. They make their way through narrow lanes across Aldersgate Street, and so into Little Britain. Mr. Tonson enters a large book-shop, and salutes the bookseller with great respect. By common repute, Mr. Scot is the largest librarian in Europe. Young Jacob listens attentively to all that passes. His father brings out William London's 'Catalogue of the most vendible Books in England,'* and inquires for 'The Anatomical Exercises of Dr. W. Harvey, Physician to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, concerning the Motion of the Heart and Blood.' Mr. Scot is somewhat at leisure, and says that he has heard more dis-

* I am indebted to Dr. John Edward Gray, of the British Museum, for the loan of this curious and rare volume, published in 1658. Dibdin says, in a note to his edition of 'More's Utopia,' that in the Introduction to this catalogue, "Almost every popular English writer, up to the period when it was composed, is quoted or referred to. Such an excellent treatise has never since accompanied any bookseller's catalogue."

putes about Dr. Harvey's opinions of the circulation of the blood, than upon any subject not theological. Mr. Tonson buys for his son, who has a taste for verse, a little volume of 'Mr. Milton's Poems, with a Mask before the Earl of Bridgwater.' Mr. Scot informs him that Mr. Milton, who had gone to Buckinghamshire upon the breaking out of the plague, has returned to his house in Bunhill Fields, and, as he hears, is engaged upon a heroic poem. He intimates that he knew in 1660 where Mr. Milton was in hiding, pretty nigh his shop. The sum which Mr. Tonson has to pay for the two books rather exceeds his expectation; but Mr. Scot gives it not only as his own opinion, but that of a very shrewd customer of his, Mr. Pepys, that, in consequence of so many books being burned, there will be a great want of books. Mr. Scot is firmly impressed with the truth of an old adage, that what is one man's loss is another man's gain, and has no scruple about raising the prices of his large stock. "A good time is coming, sir, for printers and booksellers," says Mr. Scot. "Ah, Jacob," exclaims Mr. Tonson, "if I hadn't a noble profession for you to follow, I should like to see you a bookseller."

Two years have elapsed. The good chirurgeon has fallen sick; and not even his conversion to Dr. Harvey's opinions "concerning the motion of the heart and blood" can save him. Young Jacob had employed most of his holiday hours in reading plays and poems, and he had a decided aversion to the business carried on "under the pole." His father had left his brother Richard, himself, and his three sisters, one

hundred pounds each, to be paid them upon their coming of age. The two brothers resolved for printing and bookselling. Jacob was apprenticed, on the 5th of June, 1670, to Thomas Basset, bookseller; he was then of the age of fourteen. I scarcely need trace the shadow of the boy growing up into a young man, and learning, what a practical experience only can give, to form a due estimate of the trade-value of books, and the commercial reputation of authors. After seven years he was admitted to his freedom in the Stationers' Company, and immediately afterwards commenced business with his capital of a hundred pounds. The elder brother had embarked in the same calling a year before. Thus, at the beginning of 1678, he entered "the realms of print"—a region not then divided into so many provinces as now. Under "The Judge's Head," which he set up as his sign in Chancery Lane, close to the corner of Fleet Street, he might have an open window, and exhibit, upon a capacious board, old law books and new plays, equally vendible in that vicinity of the inns of court. But he had a higher ambition than to be a mere vender of books. He would purchase and print original writings, and he would aim at securing "the most eminent hands." He published before 1679 some of the plays of Otway and Tate. But he aimed at more illustrious game. I see him as he sits in his back shop, pondering over such reputations. Mr. Otway's 'Friendship in Fashion' is somewhat too gross, and his 'Caius Marius' has been stolen, in great part, from Shakspere. As for Mr. Tate, he

may be fit to mangle 'King Lear,' but he has no genius. Could he get hold of Mr. Dryden! He, indeed, were worth having. Mr. Herringman has been Mr. Dryden's publisher, but the young aspirant hears of some disagreement. He will step over to the great writer's house near St. Bride's Church, and make a bidding for his next play. 'Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth found too late,' was published by Tonson and Swalle, in 1679. The venture of twenty pounds for the copy is held to have been too large for our Jacob to have encountered singly.

Let me endeavour to realize the shadow of the figure and deportment of the young bookseller. He is in his twenty-third year, short and stout. Twenty years later, Pope calls him "little Jacob." It was not till after his death that he became immortalized in the 'Dunciad' as "left-legg'd Jacob." In one previous edition, Lintot, "with steps unequal;" in another, "with legs expanded," "seemed to emulate great Jacob's pace." The "two left legs," as well as "leering looks," "bull face," and "Judas-coloured hair," are attributed to Dryden's pen in a satirical description of 'Bibliopolo,' a fragment of which is inserted in a virulent Tory poem, published at the time when Tonson was Secretary of the Kit-Cat Club, composed of the Whigs most distinguished as statesmen and writers. In a dialogue between Tonson and Congreve, published in 1714, in a small volume of poems by Rowe, there is a pleasant description of Tonson before he had grand associates—

"While, in your early days of reputation,
You for blue garters had not such a passion,
While yet you did not live, as now your trade is,
To drink with noble lords, and toast their ladies,
Thou, Jacob Tonson, were, to my conceiving,
The cheerfullest, best, honest fellow living."

After this, the eulogy of John Dunton is somewhat flat:—"He was bookseller to the famous Dryden, and is himself a very good judge of persons and authors; and, as there is nobody more competently qualified to give their opinion upon another, so there is none who does it with a more severe exactness, or with less partiality; for, to do Mr. Tonson justice, he speaks his mind upon all occasions, and will flatter nobody."

The young bookseller is gradually attaining a position. In 1681 there was an indefatigable collector of the fugitive poetry, especially political, which formed the chief staple of many booksellers' shops, and the most vendible commodity of the noisy hawkers. Mr. Narcissus Luttrell recorded—according to his custom of marking on each sheet and half-sheet of the 'Sibylline Leaves' the day he acquired it—that on the 17th of November he received a copy of the first part of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' "from his friend Jacob Tonson." Dryden and his publisher appear to be on a very friendly footing in 1684. He sends the poet a present of two melons; and the poet, in his letter of thanks, advises him to reprint 'Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse,' and to print a thousand copies. Dryden was now at work upon the 'Miscellany Poems;' that collection which

is sometimes called 'Tonson's,' and sometimes 'Dryden's.' According to the fashion of title-pages at that time, it was to be written "by the most eminent hands." The poet writes, "Since we are to have nothing but new, I am resolved we will have nothing but good, whomever we disoblige." The first volume was published in 1684; a second volume appeared in 1685. Malone says, "This was the first collection of that kind which had appeared for many years in England." The third 'Miscellany' was published in 1693. Tonson has now become a sharp tradesman. A letter from him to Dryden exhibits him haggling about the number of lines he ought to receive of the translation of parts of Ovid. He had only 1446 for fifty guineas, whereas he expected 1518 lines for forty guineas. He is, nevertheless, humbly submissive. "I own, if you don't think fit to add something more, I must submit; 'tis wholly at your choice." Still holding to his maxim to have a pennyworth for his penny, he adds: "You were pleased to use me much kindlier in Juvenal, which is not reckoned so easy to translate as Ovid." Although the bookseller seems mercenary enough to justify Malone's remark that "by him who is to live by the sale of books, a book is considered merely as an article of trade," Dryden soon after writes to Tonson, "I am much ashamed of myself that I am so much behindhand with you in kindness. Above all things, I am sensible of your good nature in bearing me company to this place" (somewhere in Northamptonshire).

Dryden could now ill afford to be curtailed in the

bookseller's payment for his verses. The Revolution had deprived him of his office of Poet-Laureate; but he might do better than writing 'Miscellany Poems' at the rate of ninepence a line. He will publish a specimen of his translation of Virgil in the 'Miscellany,' but he will produce the complete work by subscription. Tonson shall be his agent for printing the volumes, with engravings. The plan succeeds. There are large-paper copies for the rich and great; there are small-paper copies for a second-class of subscribers. "Be ready with the price of paper and of the books," writes Dryden. They were to meet at a tavern. "No matter for any dinner; for that is a charge to you, and I care not for it. Mr. Congreve may be with us, as a common friend." Few were the literary bargains that were settled without a dinner. Fewer, indeed, were the coffee-house meetings between author and bookseller that were not accompanied with that solace which was called a "whet." Their business is completed. Mr. Dryden goes again into the country for his poetical labours and his fishing. Mr. Tonson is "My good friend," and "I assure you I lay up your last kindnesses to me in my heart." But a terrible subject of dispute is coming up which much perplexes the bookseller. In October, 1695, the poet writes, "I expect fifty pounds in good silver: not such as I had formerly. I am not obliged to take gold, neither will I, nor stay for it beyond four-and-twenty hours after it is due." The sellers and the buyers in all trades are sorely disturbed in their calculations, whilst Charles Montague, and Locke, and Newton, are thinking over the best means for a

reform of the coinage. Mr. Tonson's customers give him bad silver for his books, and Mr. Dryden's subscribers for his five-guinea edition would take care not to pay the bookseller at the rate of twenty-one shillings for each golden piece whose exchangeable value is increased forty per cent. When the author writes, "I expect fifty pounds in good silver," he demands an impossibility. All the "good silver" was hoarded. When he says, "I am not obliged to take gold," he means that he was not obliged to take guineas at their market value as compared with the clipped and debased silver. Cunningham, a historian of the period, says, "Guineas on a sudden rose to thirty shillings a piece—all currency of other money was stopped." Dryden was, in the end, compelled to submit to the common fate of all who had to receive money in exchange for labour or goods. So the poet squabbles with his publisher into the next year, and the publisher—of whose arguments in his self-defence we hear nothing—gets hard measure from the historian one hundred and fifty years afterwards. "The ignorant and helpless peasant," says Macaulay, "was cruelly ground between one class which would give money only by tale, and another which would take it only by weight; yet his sufferings hardly exceeded those of the unfortunate race of authors. Of the way in which obscure writers were treated we may easily form a judgment from the letters, still extant, of Dryden to his bookseller Tonson." The poet's complaints, presented without any attendant circumstances, and with some suppression, would seem to imply that Tonson attempted to cheat Dryden as he

would have attempted to cheat obscure writers. But Macaulay justly says, "These complaints and demands, which have been preserved from destruction only by the eminence of the writer, are doubtless merely a fair example of the correspondence which filled all the mail-bags of England for several months."

Reconciliation soon comes. The business intercourse of Dryden and Tonson continues uninterrupted. Jacob, we may believe, sometimes meditates upon the possible loss of his great friend. Will any poetical genius arise worthy to take his place? He thinks not. He must look around him, and see which of the old writers can be successfully reproduced, like the Milton, which he has now made his own, as the world may observe in the portrait which Sir Godfrey Kneller has painted for him, with 'Paradise Lost' in his hand.

I see the shadow of a younger Jacob Tonson than he who is thus represented in the engraving. I see him bargaining, in 1683, with Brabazon Aylmer, for one-half of his interest in Milton's poem. Aylmer produces the document which transfers to him the entire copyright, signed by Samuel Simmons; and he exhibits also the original covenant of indenture, by which Milton sold to Simmons his copy for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a stipulation for other payments, according to the future sales—twenty pounds in the whole. Mr. Tonson thinks that the value of other literary wares than "prologues and plays" has risen in the market. He could scarcely have dreamt, however, that the time would

come when a hundred guineas would be given for this very indenture, and that it would be preserved in a national museum as a sacred treasure. He buys a half of Aylmer's interest, and has many cogitations about the best mode of making profit out of his bargain. The temper of the times, and the fashionable tastes, are not propitious to blank verse upon a sacred subject; and the name of Milton, the Secretary of the late Usurper, is held in hatred. It is true that Mr. Dryden had said that this was one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems which either the age or nation had produced; but the prudent Jacob would pause a little. The time might come when he who sang of "man's first disobedience" would not be hated by the clergy, and when Rochester would not be the fashion at court. He waited four years, and then issued proposals for publishing 'Paradise Lost' by subscription. He was encouraged in this undertaking by two persons of some influence — John Somers, who had written verses and other things for him, a barrister; and Francis Atterbury, a student of Christ Church. There is sufficient encouragement to proceed; and so, in 1688, Milton comes forth in folio, with a portrait, under which are engraven certain lines which Dryden had furnished to his publisher. Times were changed since Samuel Simmons paid his five pounds down for the copy, and agreed to pay five pounds more when thirteen hundred were sold. And so Mr. Dryden was not altogether opposed to the critical opinions of the existing generation when he wrote that "the force of Nature could no farther

go" when she united Homer and Virgil in Milton. Dryden not only gave his famous six lines to Tonson, but paid his crowns as a subscriber.

It is Saint Cecilia's Day, the 22nd of November, 1697. Mr. Tonson has seen the manuscript of Mr. Dryden's Ode or Song, to be performed at the Music Feast kept in Stationers' Hall—"the Anniversary Feast of the Society of Gentlemen, lovers of musick." Mr. Tonson has attended many of these performances in his own hall, and was particularly interested in one a few years before, for which his distinguished friend wrote the Ode. But on this latter occasion, as earnest Jacob tells to every one who will listen to him, Mr. Dryden has surpassed himself. Never, he thinks, and thinks truly, has there been so glorious an Ode as Alexander's Feast. His notions differed somewhat from the majority of the audience assembled on that occasion, who were accustomed to attach more importance to the music than to the words of the annual song of praise. Purcell died two years before, and Dryden wrote his elegy. One of less renown, Jeremiah Clarke, of the Chapel Royal, is now the composer. A great musician was to arise, in another generation, whose music should be married to this immortal verse. But the noble Ode can well stand alone.

The Ode to Saint Cecilia formed a part of the volume of 'Fables' which Tonson published just before the poet's death. In December, 1699, Dryden had finished the work, with a preface written in his usual pure and vigorous prose. He was paid by Tonson two hundred and fifty guineas, with an

engagement to make up that amount to three hundred pounds when a second impression should be demanded. It was thirteen years before such second edition was published. In May, 1700, the bookseller's first great *patron* died.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Tonson purchased a small house adjoining the mansion of Barn Elms, near the village of Barnes. Count Heidegger, the founder of Italian operas, resided in the mansion. George II. was here entertained with displays of fireworks and illuminated lamps; but the "boets and bainters," who were not in good odour with the Hanoverian dynasty, conferred a lustre upon Barn Elms which did not go out quite so quickly as Heidegger's fireworks. Jacob's villa, originally little more than a cottage, was a pleasanter summer place of meeting for the Kit-Cat Club than the Cat and Fiddle in Shire-lane, or the Fountain in the Strand. Like other clubable men, its members were fond of country excursions. They had occasional meetings at the Upper Flask on Hampstead Heath, but their most glorious epoch is ever associated with Barn Elms. Tonson's villa has gone into ruin, with the famous room which he built for the meetings of the Club, whose walls were hung with the portraits of the members. Nearly half a century ago, their condition was described with some graphic power, by Sir Richard Phillips. He says: "A lane, in the north-west corner of the common, brought me to Barnes' Elms, where now resides a Mr. Hoare, a banker of London. The family were not at home; but, on asking the servants if that was the house of

Mr. Tonson, they assured me, with great simplicity, that no such gentleman lived there. I named the Kit-Cat Club, as accustomed to assemble here; but the oddity of the name excited their ridicule, and I was told that no such Club was held there; but perhaps, said one to the other, the gentleman means the Club that assembles at the public house on the Common. Knowing, however, that I was at the right place, I could not avoid expressing my vexation that the periodical assemblage of the first men of their age should be so entirely forgotten by those who now reside on the spot; when one of them exclaimed, 'I should not wonder if the gentleman means the philosophers' room!'" He was conducted across a detached garden, and brought to a handsome structure, evidently the building which he sought. The decayed door was unfastened, and he entered a once elegant hall, whose ceiling had partially fallen. He ascended a dilapidated staircase, not without danger. "But," he continues, "I was well repaid for my pains. Here I found the Kit-Cat Club-room, nearly as it existed in the days of its glory. It is eighteen feet high, and forty feet long by twenty feet wide. The mouldings and ornaments were in the most superb fashion of its age; but the whole was falling to pieces, from the effects of the dry rot. My attention was chiefly attracted by the faded cloth-hanging of the room, whose red colour once set off the famous portraits of the Club that hung around it. Their marks and sizes were still visible, and the numbers and names remained as written in chalk, for the guidance of the hangers. Thus was I, as it were, by these still legible names,

brought into personal contact with Addison, Steele, and Congreve, and Garth, and Dryden, and with many *hereditary* nobles, remembered only because they were patrons of those *natural* nobles!" *

The origin and early history of the Kit-Cat Club are shrouded in the "darkness visible" of the past. Fable and tradition assert their claims to be interpreters, as in the greater subject of the beginning of nations. Elkanah Settle, whose name has been preserved, like a fly in amber, by Dryden's bitter description of him under the name of Doeg, addressed in 1699 a manuscript poem "To the most renowned the President and the rest of the Knights of the most noble Order of the Toast." In these verses the City poet asserted the dignity of this illustrious society. Malone supposes the president to have been Lord Dorset or Mr. Montague, and the Order of the Toast to have been identical with the Kit-Cat Club. The toasting glasses of this association had verses engraven upon them which might have perished with their fragile vehicle had they not been preserved in Tonson's fifth Miscellany, as verses by Halifax, Congreve, Granville, Addison, Garth, and others of the rhyming and witty companionship, whose toasts, as was irreverently written, were in honour of old cats and young kits. This ingenious derivation is ascribed to Arbuthnot. There was a writer of a far lower grade—the scurrilous Ned Ward—who, in his 'Secret History of Clubs,' gives a circumstantial account of the origin of the Kit-Cat in connection with Jacob Tonson. It was founded, he said, "by an amphibious mortal, chief merchant to the Muses."

* 'A Morning's Walk from London to Kew,' 1817, pp. 201-204.

According to Ward's narrative, we see the shadow of Jacob Tonson, as drawn by a party caricaturist, waiting hopefully in his shop for the arrival of some one or more of "his new profitable chaps, who, having more wit than experience, put but a slender value as yet upon their maiden performances." The exact locality, made illustrious by Christopher Katt and his mutton-pies, is held by Ned Ward to have been Gray's Inn-lane; by other and better authorities Shire-lane, and subsequently the Fountain Tavern in the Strand. Mr. Tonson, then, in accordance with the custom of the times, was always ready to propose a "whet" to his authors, but he now added a pastry entertainment. At length, according to the satirist, Jacob proposed a weekly meeting, where he would continue the like feast, provided his friends would give him the refusal of all their juvenile productions. This "generous proposal was very readily agreed to by the whole poetic class, and the cook's name being Christopher, for brevity called Kit, and his sign being the Cat and Fiddle, they very merrily derived a quaint denomination from puss and her master, and from thence called themselves the Kit-Cat Club." Ward goes on to say that the club, having usurped the bays from all the town, "many of the quality grew fond of sharing the everlasting honour that was likely to crown the poetical society."

There probably never existed a club whose members have had such a happy chance of their memories being preserved for the admiration or indifference of posterity as those of the Kit-Cat. Many of them are important figures in the state history of their country and in the history of its literature. Others have

passed on to the obscurity of mere Lord Chamberlains and Grooms of the Stole; whilst some of the versifiers and wits of their day have written their names upon the sands of the ebbing tide which the next flood obliterates. But they each of them were painted by Kneller. The pictures are still in the possession of Mr. R. W. Baker, the representative of the Tonson family, at Bayfordbury, in Hertfordshire. Some of them, from time to time, have been publicly exhibited, as was the case in the Manchester Exhibition of 1857. All the portraits, engraved by Faber, were published the year before the death of Jacob Tonson. They were re-engraved in 1821, accompanied by 'Memoirs of the Celebrated Persons composing the Kit-Cat Club.' These memoirs are, with some justice, described by the 'Quarterly Review' of 1822, as "one of the most blundering pieces of patchwork that the scissors of a hackney editor ever produced." It certainly is one of the dullest of books, manufactured out of the commonest materials. The portraits, it is also said by this unsparing critic, are "deficient in characteristic resemblance." That sort of family likeness here prevails which is to be found in all Kneller's faces—a quality described also as "a monotony in the countenances, and a want of spirit in the figures." This volume, by which I may trace my course as by a catalogue, in calling up some of the Shadows associated in this club with Jacob Tonson, brings them before me, nearly all in the full-bottomed peruke of the Court. The men of letters, however, affected this not ungraceful head decoration. Farquhar, in 1698, makes "the full wig as infallible a token of

wit as the laurel." Some of the grandees show with ribbons and stars and white staffs; many of them are in the négligé costume which the painter often adopted—more artistic, perhaps, than the lace cravat and the embroidered coat. Only a very few are in the cap in which Tonson himself is depicted, but some of these are lords.

First, let me call up the great Sir Godfrey himself, state painter to five sovereigns. He was equally favoured by Charles II., James II., William III., Anne, and George I. The German artist must have been exceedingly discreet in his politics and his religion to have begun life with Toryism and Popery; to have gone on happily with those who accomplished the Revolution; and to have ended his days amongst some of the staunchest adherents of the Protestant cause, the boon companions of his Kit-Cat family at Barn Elms. He must have been an amusing associate when his inordinate vanity was unlocked by good cheer. He would there scarcely venture to relate that famous vision of his which he described to Pope. He dreamt that he was dead, when, encountering St. Peter, the apostle very civilly asked his name. "I said it was Kneller. I had no sooner said so, than St. Luke, who was standing close by, turned towards me, and said, with a great deal of sweetness, 'What, the famous Sir Godfrey Kneller from England?' 'The very same, sir,' said I; 'at your service.'"* It is related, upon the authority of Pope, that Tonson got a good many fine portraits, and two of himself, by flattering Kneller's

* 'Spence's Anecdotes,' section 4.

vanity. I may picture the bookseller whispering into his ear at the Kit-Cat dinners, that he was the greatest master that ever was. That might be sufficient when the flattery was accompanied by the feast, but there were sometimes dull intervals when the Kit-Cat room no longer echoed the toasts of lords and the jokes of wits. The bookseller must then propitiate the painter in some other way. "Oh!" said Kneller, with his usual oath, to Vander Gutcht, "this old Jacob loves me; he is a very good man; you see he loves me, he sends me good things; the venison was fat."*

I pass on to another personage, who is characterised by an essentially different ruling passion from that of Sir Godfrey. The "proud" Duke of Somerset was the first of the members of the Kit-Cat who sat for his portrait, for the purpose of presenting it to Mr. Tonson, the secretary of the club. I hesitate in giving implicit credence to the stories that are related of this Whig partisan by the Tory writers, such as, that he would never suffer his children to sit in his presence, and that, not deigning to speak to servants, he gave his orders by signs. It seems scarcely consistent that this inordinately haughty peer should write to a tradesman who kept an open book-shop in a public thoroughfare, "our club is dissolved till you revive it again, which we are impatient of." This was in June, 1703, when Tonson had made a trip to Holland, to purchase paper for his noble edition Cæsar. At that exact period Vanbrugh, who

* 'Richardsoniana,' quoted in Singer's edition of Spence.

seems to have been his constant friend and correspondent, writes to him at Amsterdam, "In short, the Kit-Cat wants you much more than you ever can do them. Those who remain in town are in great desire of waiting on you at Barn Elms; not that they have finished their pictures neither; though, to excuse them as well as myself, Sir Godfrey has been most in fault. The fool has got a country house near Hampton Court, and is so busy in fitting it up (to receive nobody) that there is no getting him to work." Vanbrugh had recollections of Tonson's villa which were not associated with its ceremonial banquets. Writing to Tonson in 1725, he says, "From Woodstock we went to Lord Cobham's, seeing Middleton-Stony by the way, and eating a cheerful cold loaf at a very humble ale-house: I think the best meal I ever ate, except the first supper in the kitchen at Barnes."

Richard Tonson, the descendant of the old bookseller, who resided at Water-Oakley, on the banks of the Thames, added a room to the villa which he inherited, on whose spacious walls the portraits were hung, not so completely in the style of a master of the ceremonies, as in the memoir-writer's series of engravings. This latter Tonson, one of the representatives for Windsor, was a partner with his brother, the third Jacob, in the old bookselling business in the Strand, and may, therefore, be excused for having, with his trade notion of great names, placed together in close companionship, Dryden, Vanbrugh, Congreve, Addison, Garth, and Steele. In my discursive fashion, I shall venture to

depart from both the arrangements. Peers, without any intermixture of plebeian blood, are not considered to be the liveliest of companions. I think I may also take the liberty of saying that a knot of six authors of our own time—though not exactly possessing the qualities attributed to the tribe—

"So very clever, anxious, fine, and jealous—"

would not come up to the ordinary expectation that nothing but pearls would drop from their mouths.

In the Water-Oakley arrangement, the door of the room cuts off Tonson from Dryden, who is not given in the engraved series. It may be doubted whether Dryden took his place as a member of the Kit-Cat Club, or was introduced by Jacob, or by Jacob's descendant, out of respect to the great name by which the son of the barber-surgeon of Holborn was first brought into notice.* As I have intimated, there was no cause of discord between the poet and the bookseller, when the translator of Virgil might expect, like Dante, to be conducted through the unknown regions by his great original. Dryden had no doubt forgiven the offence which Jacob had committed a few years before. Although the poet had refused his request to dedicate his translation to King William, the publisher nevertheless "prepared the book for it; for in every figure of Æneas he has caused him to be drawn, like King William, with a hooked nose." †

* The arrangement of the portraits at Water-Oakley is given in Nichols's 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. i. 1812. Phillips mentions Dryden as amongst the names he saw chalked on the walls of the ruinous Barn Elms room.

† Dryden's letter to his son Charles.

In the arrangement of the Kit-Cat portraits by Tonson's successor, the secretary of the club is very properly placed next to Vanbrugh. In Rowe's verses, a stanza of which has already been quoted, Tonson is made to say:—

> "I'm in with Captain Vanbrugh at the present,
> A most sweet-natured gentleman and pleasant:
> He writes you comedies, draws schemes, and models,
> And builds dukes' houses upon very odd hills."

The architect of Blenheim and Castle Howard was laughed at by his brother wits, and sneered at by the pretender to taste who believed that his Strawberry Hill was pure Gothic. In a subsequent age Reynolds came to the rescue of his memory, as a great master of his art, from the attacks of Pope, and Swift, and Walpole. In the Kit-Cat Club Vanbrugh might have met with the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl of Carlisle, and this companionship might have led to his employment as an architect. However elevated he might have been in wealth and rank, he does not forget the old associations of Barn Elms, a quarter of a century after the first merry meetings there of the club. I see the Shadow of Tonson, now really old Jacob, reading with intense delight a letter written by Vanbrugh in 1727, the year before his death:—"You may believe me, when I tell you, you were often talked of both during the journey and at Stowe; and our former Kit-Cat days were remembered with pleasure; we were one night reckoning who were left, and both Lord Carlisle and Cobham expressed a great desire of having one meeting next winter, if you came to town—not as a club, but

old friends that *have been* of a club, and the best club that ever met." And yet the prejudiced and ignorant compiler of the Kit-Cat memoirs says, "The booksellers of those days were a set of heavy, vulgar, and ignorant traders. Notwithstanding their opportunities of associating with the more enlightened orders of the community, they never seem to have acquired either information or polish. Jacob Tonson was a happy specimen of the literary turn-pennies of his day."

The history of the Kit-Cat Club would be far more intelligible could I trace the dates of the admission of members. Club records are perishable commodities; and there are none remaining of the Kit-Cat Club. Ned Ward tells us that the banter upon Dryden's 'Hind and Panther,' called 'The City Mouse and Country Mouse,' stole into the world out of the witty society of the Kit-Cat. This joint production of Prior and Charles Montague was published in 1687; much to the annoyance of Dryden, who thought it hard that two young fellows, to whom he had been civil, should set the town laughing at him. Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, was painted by Kneller amongst the Kit-Cat portraits. Prior does not appear in this collection. Between 1687 and 1703, when the club had a settled locality at Barn Elms, Montague had well pushed his fortunes—to adopt Johnson's words—as an "artful and active statesman, employed in balancing parties, contriving expedients, and combating opposition." His qualities as a writer have ceased to interest; but, as a patron of letters, at the period before reliance was placed

upon that greater patron the public, who is not to be flattered into complacency by dedications and odes, his memory has survived. "From the moment," says Macaulay, "at which he began to distinguish himself in public life, he ceased to be a versifier. . . . He wisely determined to derive from the poetry of others a glory which he never could have derived from his own. As a patron of genius and learning he ranks with his two illustrious friends, Dorset and Somers." Both the eminent men thus referred to were members of the Kit-Cat, and are amongst the foremost of those who justify the eulogy of Horace Walpole: "The Kit-Cat Club, though generally mentioned as a set of wits, were, in fact, the patriots that saved Britain."

Amongst the nobles and statesmen of the period that have been made so familiar to us by the eloquent narrative of Macaulay, and who are represented in Kneller's Kit-Cat portraits, we find that of one who has been "damned to everlasting fame," not only by the great historian, but by the great novelist. If we would study the character of one of the most wicked nobles of that day, we may turn to Macaulay's History, and Thackeray's 'Esmond.' How Charles Lord Mohun could have become a member of any decent society after his participation in the murder of Mountford the actor, in 1692, it would be difficult to conjecture. There were few peers, I may believe, of the Kit-Cat Club who, whatever might have been their motive for the verdict of "Not Guilty" upon Mohun's trial before the Lord High Steward, would have applauded the saying of one great nobleman

—"After all the fellow was but a player; and players are rogues." Spence has preserved a satisfactory anecdote of our friend the bookseller, as told him by Pope, which evidently refers to the early days of the club. "The master of the house where the club met was Christopher Katt, Tonson was secretary. The day Lord Mohun and the Earl of Berkley were entered of it, Jacob said he saw they were just going to be ruined. When Lord Mohun broke down the gilded emblem on the top of *his* chair, Jacob complained to his friends, and said, 'that a man who would do that, would cut a man's throat.' So that he had the good and the forms of the society much at heart."

Thirty years after the Kit-Cat Club had taken its station at Barn Elms, Pope, in his first satire, published in 1733, celebrated a distinguished epicure of that period:—

> "Each mortal has his pleasure; none deny
> Scarsdale his bottle, Darty his ham-pie."

Darty was Charles Dartiquenave, or Dartineuf. The famous lover of "ham-pie" might have been one of the early members of the Kit-Cat, who rejoiced in Christopher Katt's "mutton-pies." Swift describes him to Stella as "the man who knows everthing and that everybody knows, and where a knot of rabble are going on a holiday, and where they were last." He wrote a paper in 'The Tatler' on the use of wine, in which Addison is supposed to be pointed at. "I have the good fortune to be intimate with a gentleman who has an inexhaustible source of wit to entertain the curious, the grave, the humorous, and the

frolic. He can transform himself into different shapes, and adapt himself to every company; yet, in a coffee-house, or in the ordinary course of affairs, appears rather dull than sprightly. You can seldom get him to the tavern; but when once he is arrived to his pint, and begins to look about, and like his company, you admire a thousand things in him which before lay buried. Then you discover the brightness of his mind and the strength of his judgment, accompanied with the most graceful mirth."

It is scarcely necessary that I should notice Addison or Steele as members of the Kit-Cat Club, except as they hover round the Shadow of Jacob Tonson. The bookseller, it would appear from Pope's representations, had no great affection for the famous essayist:—"Old Jacob Tonson did not like Mr. Addison. He had a quarrel with him, and, after his quitting the secretaryship, used frequently to say of him: 'One day or other you'll see that man a bishop! I'm sure he looks that way; and, indeed I ever thought him a priest in his heart.'" In Spence's 'Anecdotes' Tonson is made to say: "Addison was so eager to be the *first* name, that he and his friend Sir Richard Steele used to run down even Dryden's character as far as they could. Pope and Congreve used to support it." Tonson, indeed, appears to have been chivalrously faithful to his first great friend. There is a curious letter addressed to him by Dennis the critic, in 1715, which thus begins:—"When I had the good fortune to meet you in the City, it was with concern that I heard from you of the attempt to lessen the reputa-

Quoted in Mr. Carruthers' 'Pope,' vol. ii. p. 445.

tion of Mr. Dryden; and 'tis with indignation that I have since learnt that that attempt has chiefly been carried on by small poets." Pope is here the jealous rival who is pointed at. One more anecdote which Spence gives, on the authority of Dr. Leigh:—"Mr. Addison was not a good-natured man, and very jealous of rivals. Being one evening in company with Philips, and the poems of Blenheim and the Campaign being talked of, he made it his whole business to run down blank-verse. Philips never spoke till between eleven and twelve o'clock, nor even then could do it in his own defence. It was at Jacob Tonson's; and a gentleman in company ended the dispute, by asking Jacob what poem he ever got the most by? Jacob immediately named Milton's 'Paradise Lost.'"

The statesmen of the Kit-Cat Club—"the patriots that saved Britain"—thus lived in social union with the Whig writers who were devoted to the chiefs of the party that opened their road to preferment. This band of orators and wits were naturally hateful to the Tory authors that Harley and Bolingbroke were nursing into the bitter satirists of the weekly sheets. Jacob Tonson of course came in for a due share of invective. In a poem entitled 'Factions Displayed' he is ironically introduced as "the touchstone of all modern wit;" and he is made to vilify the great ones of Barn Elms:—

"I am the founder of your loved Kit-Cat,
A club that gave direction to the State;
'Twas there we first instructed all our youth
To talk profane and laugh at sacred truth;
We taught them how to boast, and rhyme, and bite,
To sleep away the day, and drink away the night."

Tonson may be deemed the prince of booksellers in his association with some of the most eminent men of his own time. But the mighty ones of the past had not less to do than the living in the establishment of his fortune and his fame. He identified himself with Milton by first making 'Paradise Lost' popular. A few years after, when he moved from his old shop in Chancery Lane, he no longer traded under the sign of "The Judge's Head," but set up "Shakspere's Head." He was truly the first bookseller who threw open Shakspere to a reading public. The four folio editions had become scarce even in his time. The third folio was held to have been destroyed in the fire of London. In 1709 Tonson produced Rowe's edition in octavo. Bernard Lintot the elder, who about the same time republished Shakspere's Poems, expresses himself in his advertisement as if Tonson's speculation were an experiment not absolutely certain of success:—"The writings of Mr. Shakspere are in so great esteem that several gentlemen have subscribed to a late edition of his Dramatic Works in six volumes, which makes me hope that this little book will not be unacceptable to the public." Tonson and his family were long associated with editions of Shakspere. Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Warburton, Johnson, and Capell, were liberally paid by the Tonsons for their editorial services—as liberally, perhaps, as the demand of a new reading public would allow.

CHAPTER IV.

THOMAS GENT, PRINTER, OF YORK.



OUTHEY, in his most amusing volume of 'The Doctor,' writes in Chapter CXIV., "If I were given to prolixity and allowed myself to be led away, I might here be tempted to relate certain particulars concerning Thomas Gent." In the previous chapter Southey says, "His autobiography is as characteristic as John Dunton's, and, like it, contains much information relating to the state of the press in his days, and the trade of literature." Of some of these matters the author of 'The Doctor' gives a very brief notice, and, as stated in his heading of Chapter CXIV., only "hints at certain circumstances in the life of Thomas Gent, on which he does not think it necessary to dwell." The autobiography from which these "certain circumstances" are derived was published in 1832 by Mr. Thomas Thorpe, which celebrated bookseller met with the MS. in a collection of books that he had purchased in Ireland. Without being "given to prolixity," I may take this memoir of Thomas Gent, written in his own hand in 1746, as the groundwork of a chapter essentially connected with "the subject before me."

Thomas Gent, though of English extraction, was

born of humble parents in Dublin. He was apprenticed to a printer of that city, who used him so brutally that, having served three years of his time, he ran away, in August, 1710, with seventeen pence in his pocket. Having got into the hold of a vessel bound for England, he met with kind usage from the captain, and was landed at Park-gate. Setting forward towards Chester, he tried there to obtain employment; "but then no printing-press, as I could hear of, was set up in those parts." He reached St. Albans with twopence in his pocket, but there found a good landlord, who, observing him very lame and tired, gave him food and lodging. There is now a break in the narrative; but when it is resumed we find him in the employ of Mr. Midwinter, a London printer, who carried on his trade at Pie Corner. His labour in this servitude, where he remained until he was about twenty years old, appears to have been severe and incessant, "working many times from five in the morning till twelve at night, and frequently without food from breakfast time till five or six in the evening, *through our hurry with hawkers.*"

Let me diverge a little from my pursuit of the shadow of Thomas Gent, to glance at that large portion of the printing and bookselling business of London which was chiefly carried on by hawkers. This business was in full activity when Gent arrived in London in 1710. It soon received a heavy blow, whose consequences were thus anticipated by Swift in his 'Journal to Stella,' January 31, 1711: "They are here intending to tax all little printed penny papers, a halfpenny every half-sheet, which will

utterly ruin Grub-street." Swift's definition of Grub-street, as the generic name for the literature of hawkers, has superseded that of Johnson, in his Dictionary, in which, with a sly humour, he points at his own avocations: "Originally the name of a street near Moorfields, in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *grub-street*." The actual Grub-street has of late years been refined into Milton-street. The name might not have looked quite so genteel on a great haberdasher's bill of parcels, but it has literary associations which have their significance in connection with the history of an interesting period. When Hoole, the translator of 'Tasso,' told Johnson he was born in Moorfields, and had received part of his early instruction in Grub-street: "Sir," said Johnson, "you have been *regularly* educated." The polite changers of the vulgar name sought to justify their act by alleging that Grub-street was very near Cripplegate Church where Milton was buried.

In spite of Swift's prediction, Grub-street was not utterly ruined by the dread of the halfpenny stamp. A new spirit had come over it when Thomas Gent first became a slave to a hard task-master. The lad was of good abilities, had received a decent education, and it is not to be supposed that he could shut his ears to what the compositors and the hawkers talked about—that there had been published a penny paper twice a week, called 'The Tatler,' which was written by some of the cleverest men in the kingdom, but was not above the level of the capacity of a printer'

apprentice. A successor to that famous half-sheet was then being published daily, which all the world was reading. 'The Spectator' had totally eclipsed 'The British Apollo' and 'The Observator,' and made the coffee-house politicians care less for 'The Flying Post' and 'The Post Boy.'

The war was coming to an end: troops were discharged. In 'The Tatler' of May 20, 1709, Addison wrote his first paper, so charming in its delicate humour and so truthfully describing the leading newspapers of the time, that I may be permitted to transcribe part of it. There are not many readers now, I fear, of the old essayists:—"There is another sort of gentlemen whom I am much more concerned for, and that is the ingenious fraternity of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member: I mean the news-writers of Great Britain, whether Post-men or Post-boys, or by what other name or title soever dignified or distinguished. The case of these gentlemen is, I think, more hard than that of the soldiers, considering that they have taken more towns and fought more battles. They have been upon parties and skirmishes, when our armies have lain still; and given the general assault to many a place, when the besiegers were quiet in their trenches. They have made us masters of several strong towns many weeks before our generals could do it; and completed victories when our greatest captains have been glad to come off with a drawn battle. Where Prince Eugene has slain his thousands, Boyer has slain his ten thousands. This gentleman can, indeed, be never enough commended for his courage and intrepidity during this whole war: he has laid about him with an inex-

pressible fury, and, like the offended Marius of ancient Rome, made such havoc among his countrymen as must be the work of two or three ages to repair. It must be confessed the redoubted Mr. Buckley has shed as much blood as the former; but I cannot forbear saying (and I hope it will not look like envy) that we regard our brother Buckley as a kind of Drawcansir, who spares neither friend nor foe, but generally kills as many of his own side as the enemy's. It is impossible for this ingenious sort of men to subsist after a peace. Every one remembers the shifts they were driven to in the reign of King Charles II., when they could not furnish out a single paper of news without lighting up a comet in Germany, or a fire in Moscow. There scarce appeared a letter without a paragraph on an earthquake. Prodigies were grown so familiar that they had lost their name, as a great poet of that age has it. I remember Mr. Dyer, who is justly looked upon by all the fox-hunters in the nation as the greatest statesman our country has produced, was particularly famous for dealing in whales, insomuch that in five months' time (for I had the curiosity to examine his letters on that occasion) he brought three into the mouth of the River Thames, besides two porpoises and a sturgeon. The judicious and wary Mr. Ichabod Dawks hath all along been the rival of this great writer, and got himself a reputation from plagues and famines; by which, in those days, he destroyed as great multitudes as he has lately done by the sword. In every dearth of news Grand Cairo was sure to be unpeopled."

With all his hard work, Gent could get a peep at

some of these vehicles of popular instruction and entertainment, and might learn better to qualify himself for something higher than the lot of a printer's apprentice, who was half-starved, and sometimes beaten. When the dreaded halfpenny duty was imposed on the 12th of August, 1712, Swift wrote to Stella, "Do you know that Grub-street is dead and gone last week? No more ghosts or murders now for love or money. I plied it close the last fortnight, and published at least seven papers of my own, besides some of other people's." But Grub-street was not even then "dead and gone:" there was still abundant work for "the hawkers." The Tories had driven the Whigs from power, and in spite of the pillory and the gallows with which Bolingbroke threatened obscure scribblers, and which modes of keeping things quiet Swift advocated, the war of pamphlets was furiously carried on. It mattered little to many printers and publishers what side they took; and so probably the young Irishman, who was serving out his apprenticeship with Mr. Midwinter, was as indifferent to party considerations as his master. He was about twenty years of age when he says of the tyrant, "I was severely beaten for sending him a letter to Islington, complaining I was in a poor philosopher's condition, for want of a pair of breeches." But this jackal of hawkers began to find out the youth's value: "Upon my writing Dr. Sacheverel's sermon after his suspension, for which I waited from morning to evening to hear him, he gave me what I wanted, and a crown piece besides, because he took near thirty pounds that week by it."

But Midwinter parted with Gent in a friendly manner, as he was not more full of business than his regular hands could do. The youth soon got employ, and continued at work so briskly that by Saturday night he had earned seventeen shillings. He was, however, fond of novelty, and went to work at another place, from which he was discharged as a foreigner in about three weeks. He was not a freeman of London; so he got no regular employment, but laboured here and there without settlement, upon what was called "smouting work." By this he obtained a tolerable subsistence. But through the recommendation of a hawker, he formed an engagement with Mr. White, of York, who "wanted a young man at the business." This old gentleman was King's printer for York and five counties, which preferment he had obtained by printing the Declaration of the Prince of Orange, when all the printers of London had refused to undertake so dangerous a piece of work. Mr. White, Gent says, had plenty of business, there being few printers except in London at that time—"none then, I am sure, at Chester, Liverpool, Whitehaven, Preston, Manchester, Kendal, and Leeds."

When Gent arrived at Mr. White's door at York, he records "it was opened by the head-maiden, that is now my dear spouse." Southey has detailed the course of the true love which the young printer felt for Mistress Alice Guy, "upper maiden to Mrs. White." Prudential considerations long prevented him from completing the engagement with "his dear at York." After some years the over-cautious lover found that the lady had married. He consoled

himself, when he heard this sad news in London, by writing a copy of verses, entitled 'The Forsaken Lover's Letter to his former Sweetheart," which production he gave to Mr. Dodd, a ballad printer, who "sold thousands of them, for which he offered me a price; but, as it was on my own proper concern, I scorned to accept of anything except a glass of comfort or so." Other amorous poets have not been quite so disinterested, nor have they exercised so much reticence about their "own proper concern." When he heard, in 1724, that the quondam Alice Guy had become a widow, he started at once in the stage-coach from the Black Swan in Holborn, which took him to York in four days' time. "Here I found my dearest once more, though much altered to what she was about ten years before, that I had not seen her: there was no need for new courtship; but decency suspended the ceremony of marriage for some time."

Having thus happily disposed of the domestic affairs of Thomas Gent, I return to his first interview with old Mr. White, who was at his dinner by the fireside, sitting in a noble arm-chair, with a good large fire before him. "I had a guinea in my shoe-lining, which I pulled out to ease my foot, at which the old gentleman smiled, and pleasantly said it was more than he had ever seen a journeyman save before." This was pretty much the case when the writer of these Shadows first knew something of the habit of printers in his father's office. There was one exception. A compositor who worked for him at Windsor for many years was proud to show a guinea, which

he said he had always kept in his pocket to unscrew his composing-stick. Gent appears to have boarded in the family of Mr. White, in which he lived as happy as he could wish until the year was at an end for which he had been hired. An irrepressible desire then came over him to visit his friends in Ireland. Young ladies of the middle rank were even then novel-readers, although they had no light reading but the cumbrous folios or interminable duodecimos translated from the French of M. de la Calprenede and Mademoiselle Scudery. There were as yet no Defoes, or Richardsons, or Fieldings. So Thomas Gent, in describing his pleasant intercourse with his "dear niece Anne Standish, a perfect beauty," says, "Often did we walk till late hours in the garden; she could tell me almost every passage in 'Cassandra,' a celebrated romance that I had bought for her at London." There was a choice of the works of Calprenede, whose 'Pharamond,' 'Cassandra,' and 'Cleopatra' rivalled the great heroic romances of Scudery, in which Greeks and Romans talked the language of the Court of Louis Quatorze. Gent's pleasant hours in Dublin—where he had obtained work with one who printed many good books—were cut short by "a sad persecution from my old master Powell, who employed officers to seize me for leaving my apprenticeship with him." He rejoices that he had a good kingdom to return to, and determined to leave Ireland privately. There is again a break in his narrative; but, in 1716, we find him again in the employ of his old master, Midwinter. In 1717 he became, as he said, absolutely free both in England

and Ireland, for he was made a freeman of the Company of Stationers, and on the 9th of October "commenced citizen of London. We dined at a tavern that day, and my part of the treat, with other expenses, came to about 3*l*." Soon after, his old Dublin master freed him from all obligation by accepting 5*l*. for his discharge.

When Thomas Gent became "a citizen," he naturally thought he ought to make better terms for his services than when he stood in the doubtful position of a runaway apprentice. Midwinter was of a different opinion, and they parted. He was soon constrained "to labour at the press, with jobs done at various houses, since work at case was not so brisk but what there were enough of hands to perform it." His strength was then put to the utmost stretch, till he applied to the cautious and ingenious Mr. Wilkins, in Little Britain. "On his asking with whom and where I served my time, he thought, as it was a ballad house, that I must in consequence be insufficient for his polite business." Mr. Wilkins was the favourite printer of the Whig party, and from his office, about this period, five different newspapers were issued, one of which, 'The Whitehall Evening Post,' defied the almost inevitable decay of a century's growth. Here he was working alternately at press and case; but the great fatigue of the press made him seek for employ "more suitable to my genius and constitution," desiring also to be quit of a malignant fellow-workman, who afterwards obtained a disgraceful notoriety, which subsequently may be worth a passing notice. In the office of Mr. Watts,

the partner of Jacob Tonson, our young Irishman found employment not unworthy of a compositor who had a tincture of learning. "The fame of Mr. John Watts for excellently good printing will endure as long as any public library shall exist." This is the testimony of an experienced judge, Mr. John Nichols. In that famous office, a few years later, was working another youth, whose earlier fame as a great discoverer in science was excelled by the boldness and wisdom of his statesmanship in the great revolt which gave freedom to the American colonies. When Thomas Gent, the printer of York, died in 1778, and was soon forgotten by the world, Benjamin Franklin was at the height of his influence upon the destinies of nations. Some part of the education of the great printer of Philadelphia belongs to London. Let me turn aside from smaller men to look at him, a youth of nineteen, when he lodged in Little Britain, and made an acquaintance with Wilcot, a bookseller there, who had an immense collection of second-hand books, which were lent to him upon reasonable terms, "circulating libraries not being then in use." The American lad works for a year at Palmer's, "a famous printing-house in Bartholomew Close." But the picture he has drawn of himself, as he worked in the office of Mr. Watts, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, will bear no abridgment at my hands. "Here," he records in his Autobiography, "I continued all the rest of my stay in London. At my first admission into a printing-house I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been used to in America, where

presswork is mixed with the composing. I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great drinkers of beer. On occasion, I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and similar instances, that the *Water American*, as they called me, was *stronger* than themselves who drank *strong* beer! We had an alehouse boy, who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom. . . . . Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing-room, I left the pressmen. . . . . From my example, a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could be supplied from a neighbouring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz. three halfpence. . . . . My constant attendance (I never making a St. Monday) recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing occasioned my being put upon work of despatch, which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably." It is possible to imagine the shadow of Jacob Tonson walking round the printing-office with his partner, and having heard the story of the young man from Boston, who drank

no beer, never made a St. Monday, and was wonderfully quick at composing, looking at him with something of admiration, and prophesying that he would make a figure in the world.

Thomas Gent lost his situation with the liberal and intelligent partner of Tonson by an act of imprudence, if not of covetousness. There was a press recently set up near Mr. Watts's office, where a newspaper was printed. The proprietor was Mr. Francis Clifton, "who had a liberal education at Oxford, but proved a Roman Catholic." He being in great distress for a hand, Gent ventured to assist him for a day or two. "This, being discovered, was very ill interpreted." Mr. Clifton offered him large wages, though himself in poor circumstances; so the unstable youth resolved to mix himself up with the doubtful fortunes of the Roman Catholic printer. This somewhat dangerous connexion, at a period of Jacobite plots and political ferments, opens some curious views of the printing and publishing of those times. Clifton, apprehensive that an estreat might be issued against him, moved his goods into the Liberty of the Fleet, and there became entered as a prisoner. "The Catholics often relieved him, and he was equally as ready to oblige them in his publications." Gent was paid honestly almost every week; but what a change from the comfortable office of Mr. Watts, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. "Sometime, in extreme weather, have I worked under a mean shed adjoining to the prison wall, when snow and rain have fallen alternately on the cases; yet the number of wide-mouthed stentorian hawkers,

brisk trade, and very often a glass of good ale, revived the drooping spirits of me and other workmen." Clifton had printed a pamphlet vindicating the character of a clergyman who had been committed to the King's Bench on an action of *scandalum magnatum*. Gent composed the letters and helped to work off the matter at press, but was not permitted to know the name of the author. Let me call up the shadows of a scene new to history. Clifton and his journeymen, with their work completed, are in the spacious hall of a large sort of monastic building. They sit near a large table covered with an ancient carpet of curious work, on which a bottle of wine is soon placed for their entertainment. A grave gentleman, in a black lay habit, enters, who discourses pleasantly on many subjects. But this agreeable talk is closed with a serious injunction. They are bidden to be secret. "You need not fear me, sir," said Clifton. The wine has got into Gent's head, and he is more diffuse in his assurances: "And I, good sir, you may be less afraid of; for I protest I do not know where I am, much less your person; nor heard where I should be driven, or if I shall not be drove to Jerusalem before I get home again. I drink to your health, sir, in this brimful glass." That monastic building was in Dean's Yard, Westminster; the spacious hall was in the Deanery; the Bishop of Rochester was Dean of Westminster; and when, in 1723, Gent saw Dr. Atterbury a state prisoner in a coach, guarded from Westminster to the Tower, he knew to whose health he had drunk when he had got "merrily tipsy" in

1719. He thanked God that his master and he had done nothing of offence at that time on any political account,—"a thing that produces such direful consequences." He might well be thankful; for he soon after witnessed a young printer, John Matthews, drawn upon a sledge, having been found guilty of high treason, for printing a work called 'Vox Populi, vox Dei.' The principal evidence against him was John Vesey, a journeyman, who did not long survive the youth. "At his burial, in an obscure part of Islington churchyard, many of the printers' boys who run of errands, called Devils, made a noise like such with their ball-stocks, carried thither for that purpose. The minister was much interrupted during the burial service, and shameful indignities were committed at the grave." Printers who had been at Islington that day got into trouble with the Courts at Westminster.

Gent had saved money, and was disposed to invest it in printing materials, with a view to settling in the country. At the recommendation of a friend who printed the Bellman's verses at Christmas — for which sometimes he had the honour of being the poet — he purchased some founts of letter from Mr. Mist which were designed for the furnace. He bought also some new founts and a little press, with which he says, "I did now and then a job of my own," though he continued as a journeyman with Mr. Midwinter. The master and his men coming under the suspicion of the Government, were each arrested by a King's messenger. Gent had been accused of having written some lines concerning

the imprisoned Bishop of Rochester that had given offence. When his master was brought in a prisoner, the author-compositor appealed to him in terms which tell us how little bookselling and printing operations in other matters than those of Church and State had been improved since the time of John Dunton. "What, sir, have they made me appear greater than you, by placing me first in the warrant for our apprehension?—me, who am but your servant, and, you know, have wrote nothing for you this long time, except an abridgment of three volumes of 'Crusoe' into one!" The charge of sedition against Gent and his master was soon dismissed. The dishonest abridgment of 'Crusoe' is not so easily disposed of.

On the 23rd of April, 1719, there was entered at Stationers' Hall, by William Taylor, a book which was published in the same month, in one octavo volume. It was entitled, 'The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner, who lived eight-and-twenty years all alone in an uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River Oroonoque, having been cast on shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the men perished but himself; with an Account how he was at last strangely delivered by Pirates. Written by himself.' It is recorded that the manuscript of 'Robinson Crusoe' passed through the whole trade before it could find a purchaser. The fortunate purchaser, William Taylor, who carried on his business at the Ship, in Paternoster-row, sold four editions in as many months. In the following August

appeared another volume, entitled, 'The further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: being the Second and Last Part of his Life.' This was also published by William Taylor. It appears from the preface that the abridgers had already been at work upon the first part. Their labour is denounced by Defoe as knavish and ridiculous, "seeing, while to shorten the book, that they may seem to reduce the value, they strip it of all those reflections, as well religious as moral, which are not only the greatest beauties of the work, but are calculated for the infinite advantage of the reader." In the 'St. James's Post' for August the 7th, 1719, an advertisement declares that "the pretended abridgment of 'Robinson Crusoe,' clandestinely printed for T. Cox, consists only of some scattered passages incoherently tacked together." The vendors were threatened with prosecution according to law. Cox vindicated himself from any concern in the piracy. But this abridgment was not the work of Thomas Gent. In 1722 there was a third volume published, entitled 'Serious Reflections during the Life, and surprising Adventures, of Robinson Crusoe, with his Vision of the Angelic World. Written by himself.' "An abridgment of three volumes of Crusoe into one," was the literary task which Gent performed for Midwinter, and which he records without much compunction. Defoe was nearly sixty years of age when 'Robinson Crusoe' was published. He had discovered the class of subjects best suited to his wonderful power of making fiction look like reality. From 1720 to 1725, he every year produced a new work, of which it is truly

said, "The art of natural story-telling which can discard every resort to mere writing or reflection, and rest solely on what people, in peculiar situations, say and do, just as if there were no reader to hear all about it, has had no such astonishing illustrations."* The great novelist considered that "to shorten" was an easy task to the pirate, who had only to omit the moral and religious reflections. But these coarse pruners, with hatchet in hand to lop and hew, were equally ready to omit those minute details, which give to Defoe's romances the charm of verisimilitude. Had they dealt in this way with the 'History of the Plague,' they would have abridged all those wonderful touches which made a great physician quote the book as the narrative of an eye-witness. The 'Life and Adventures of Colonel Jack' might have been suffered to retain those descriptions which have given it a place amongst the true lives of highwaymen; but the early scenes in which we see the London vagabond sleeping on the ashes of the glass-houses might have been thrown aside for the hero who was to stop a coach with "Stand and Deliver." It has been truly said that Richardson founded his style of minute narrative wholly upon Defoe.

In his London career as a printer of "Grub-street" pamphlets, Thomas Gent seems to have exercised the happy faculty of combining profit with safety. Having set up his press and types in a light room that was adjoining to the garden of the Fleet prison,

* 'Historical and Biographical Essays.' John Forster, vol. ii. p. 96.

"where the gentlemen prisoners took their diversion," he had to exercise no common ingenuity in the productions of his ready pen. "Here I published, truly, some things relating to the Bishop, worked by hired servants, that made some amends for what I had suffered through wrong information on his account; and whilst I pleased the people by an artful taking title, I strove to instil into them the principles of loyalty, love, and obedience." Sometimes he could find business enough to employ him in printing on his own account. "I printed a collection of songs proper for the summer's entertainment; a little book of emblems; and a 'Preparation for Death,' kept me at work for some months after, with bills for the Cockpits, which were done twice a week." Nothing came amiss. "But business failing, and journey-work being brisk in great houses, I applied to Mr. Henry Woodfall, who readily accepted me, and I helped to finish the part that he had of a learned Dictionary." It is pleasant to meet thus early with the name of Woodfall. This kind employer of Gent carried on his business Without Temple Bar. He was working as a journeyman to one of Pope's printers, when the great poet, who was kind to most persons except to poor authors, recognised his abilities and knowledge, and helped him to go into business for himself, as he did Robert Dodsley. Did Pope ever hear Henry Woodfall sing that famous ballad of 'Darby and Joan,' which he made when he was apprenticed to Mr. Darby, of whom Dunton says, "He goes to Heaven with the Anabaptists"—whose wife is "chaste as a picture cut in alabaster—Sir Roger

L'Estrange, on his bended knees, could not prevail for so much as a wanton look?" Wicked Henry Woodfall! Did you ever dare to chaunt this ditty at a weigh-goose? Mr. Henry Woodfall!—recorded as "known to be well affected to King George." How that name, the first of a family eminent as printers during nearly a century, calls up the recollections of political contests, when Jacobitism was quietly inurned, and the Court of St. Germain's was no longer a terror to the Court of St. James's. In the times when Atterbury was banished, Thomas Gent seems perpetually amongst the other "scum uppermost," when the political cauldron is boiling over. When Christopher Layer, a barrister, suffered capital punishment in 1733, our printer did his literary work like a great artist. "I continued," he says, "working for Mr. Woodfall until the execution of Counsellor Layer, on whose few dying words I formed observations in nature of a large speech, and had a run of sale for about three days successively, which obliged me to keep in my own apartments, the unruly hawkers being ready to pull my press in pieces for the goods." In Nichols's 'Literary Anecdotes,' there is a curious list of all the Printing Houses in London and Westminster, and in several Corporation towns, most humbly laid before the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Townshend, Secretary of State. This was originally printed by Oldys, the antiquarian. Samuel Negus, the compiler of this list, was the "malignant fellow-workman" who tormented Gent when they were in the employ of Mr. Wilkins. This list classes the printers of 1720 as those "Known

to be well affected to King George;" as "Non-jurors;" and as "Said to be High Flyers." Amongst the latter is "Gent, Pye Corner." A fourth classification is that of "Roman Catholics." A conversation which Gent had on this subject with Mr. Woodfall is worthy a transcript, as an anecdote which exhibits the Printers and the Government in an honourable attitude. With this characteristic feature of the days when printing was not so safe an operation as in the reign of Queen Victoria, I close my shadowy view of the career of Gent in London.

"After the hurry was over," writes Gent, "I returned to my master, and continuing some time, he one morning told me that the night before, being in the club of master printers of the higher class, he laughed heartily upon my account. 'Pray, why so, sir!' said I; 'how came I to be the theme?' 'Why,' said he, 'has not that fellow, Sam Negus, put you amongst the catalogue of masters, and placed you in Pye Corner?' 'It's like his blunders,' said I; 'but how came he to print such a catalogue?' 'Why,' replied he, 'the creature, who is now set up as a master himself, is not satisfied, but wants to be messenger of the press; so that he has exhibited what printing-houses there are in England to the Secretary of State, to show his readiness to visit them, provided he is furnished with authority and profit; he has mentioned who he thought were of high or low principles, but is sadly mistaken, for he has called whigs tories, and tories whigs, as wretched in calculations as Sir John Wronghead in his vote; and I'll assure you, Mr. Gent, that you're amongst

the tories.' 'Tis through such a rascal as him,' answered I, 'that I was made a state prisoner; but has he obtained his ends?' 'No,' said Mr. Woodfall; 'the Secretary, laughing at the list, bantered Mr. Watts with what a hopeful company there was of the profession, and gave him a copy, which, being brought into Wild-court, the men joyfully put it to the press, and dispersed the paltry petition, too much honoured by the names of creditable persons he had traduced, throughout the members of the profession, that so the vile wretch might be justly exposed.' 'He well deserved it,' thought I, and so dropt him."

Gent was sometimes working his own press, and sometimes employed as a journeyman. He had been working for "the ingenious Mr. Richardson, in Salisbury Court," and also as manager of a printing business carried on by a "gentlewoman," when a quondam partner at Mr. Midwinter's came to his chambers and said, "Tommy, all these fine materials of yours must be moved to York, and you must go too, for your first sweetheart is now at liberty, and left in good circumstances by her dear spouse, who deceased but of late." Tommy, having expressed his opinion that he might not trifle with a widow as he had formerly done with a maid, packed up his goods, and started for York. The happy result of this journey I have already mentioned. Gent never left York after 1724. His "web of life" there was "of a chequered yarn." He was unsuccessful in the publication of a newspaper. He acquired money and reputation by three topographical works which he wrote and printed—the 'Famous History of the City

of York;' the 'History of the Loyal Town of Ripon,' &c.; and the 'History of the Royal and Beautiful Town of Kingston-upon-Hull.' He died at his house at York, in his 87th year, in poor circumstances. A portrait of him in his old age was painted by one of the Drakes, of York, and was exhibited for his profit. Of this there is a fine mezzotinto engraving by Valentine Green. A play, also, was twice performed for his benefit. His Shop-bill, in 1743, is a curious specimen of the sober, almost lofty style, in which the better educated of those who followed the liberal calling of printer and bookseller were wont to address their claims for the patronage of scholars and gentlemen, with some approach to a footing of equality.

THOMAS GENT,

ÆTAT. 50,

LAUS DEO:

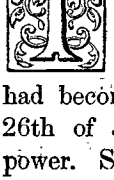
A PERSON descended from the Gents in Staffordshire, freeman of London, York, and two other remarkable cities, lawful printer and stationer; a lover of these English northern parts, in which, as a right master, he has brought up several reputable servants; and, under God's divine providence, hitherto protected his family, to the comfort also of some needy, but honest deserving people. Within his new well-contrived office, abovesaid, printing work is performed in a curious and judicious manner, having sets of fine characters for the Greek, Latin, English, Mathematics, &c. He sells the Histories of Rome, France, England, particularly of this ancient City, Aynsty, and extensive County, in five volumes; likewise a book of the holy life of St. Winifred, and her wonderful Cambrian fountain. He has stimulated an ingenious founder to cast such musical types, for the common press, as never yet were exhibited; and has prepared a new edition for his York History against the time when the few remaining of that first and large impression are disposed of, wherein will appear several remarkable occurrences and amendments, if it pleases the Divine Majesty to grant him life at the publication thereof.

Psallite Domino, in citharâ, in citharâ et voce Psalmi; in tubis ductilibus, et voce tubæ corneæ.

Ipsi vero in vanum quæsierunt animam meam, introibunt in inferiora terræ; tradentur in manus gladii; partes vulpium erunt.

CHAPTER V.

THE TONSONS; LINTOTTS; CURLL.



HERE has been a dinner at "young Jacob Tonson's"—a literary dinner at which Swift, and Steele, and Addison, were of the company. The nephew of old Jacob had become his partner. This dinner was on the 26th of July, 1711. The Tories had come into power. Swift had deserted his former political friends; and so had Prior, who was in consequence expelled from the Kit-cat Club. The distinguished guests are departed, and the nephew and the uncle are left alone to talk over the occurrences of the evening. It had not been altogether a pleasant evening, for Addison and Swift were not cordial; and Steele, good-tempered as he was at all times, and especially so over his wine, was more than usually careful in his talk. "Well! I think you gave that puffed-up Vicar of Laracor a piece of your mind when you charged him with trying to make the Secretary take from us the printing of 'The Gazette.'" "But he denied it," replied old Jacob. "True! But he writes foul libels, and therefore might not stick at a falsehood." "No, no, he is too proud to *speak* a lie, especially when there is a chance of being found out." "I firmly believe that it was he," said young Jacob, "who got

Steele turned out of his office of 'Gazette' writer." "It is a great shame," said the uncle, "'The Gazette' is just that one little place which an honest government would give to a deserving man of letters, without regard to party; or at any rate would not turn out the holder of it when he had done nothing offensive in his office. Poor Dick was very careful. I have heard him say that the Gazetteer was the lowest minister of state; and that he never erred against the rules observed by all ministries to keep 'The Gazette' very innocent and very insipid." "It will become a post for the lowest Grub-street Judas, or the vulgarest hanger-on of an Irish viceroy," quoth young Jacob.*

The Tonsons did not give themselves up to fruitless lamentations when they lost the printing of 'The Gazette.' Naturally they did not abate their suspicions of the management of Swift in these petty things of party. He was well known to be stirring heaven and earth to procure John Barber some lucrative appointments, in connexion with a brother stationer. Barber and his lucky friend appear to have been insatiable in their demands upon the Tory government. In the 'Journal to Stella' he describes

* "Mr. Addison and I have at last met again. I dined with him and Steele to-day at young Jacob Tonson's. The two Jacobs think it is I who have made the secretary take from them the printing of the 'Gazette,' which they are going to lose, and Ben Tooke and another are to have it. Jacob came to me t'other day to make his court; but I told him it was too late, and that it was not my doing. I reckon they will lose it in a week or two."—'Swift's Journal to Stella,' July 26th, 1711.

these exertions. He had obtained for them the appointment of Stationers to the Ordnance—the third employment he had got for them. When they still want something more, the great humourist, who can be kind enough to the most unblushing partisan, writes (January 16, 1711-12):—"My printer and bookseller want me to hook in another employment for them in the Tower, because it was enjoyed before by a stationer, although it be to serve the Ordnance with oil, tallow, &c., and is worth four hundred pounds per annum more. I will try what I can do. They are resolved to ask several other employments of the same nature to other offices; and *I will then grease fat sows*, and see whether it be possible to satisfy them. Why am not I a stationer?" In a letter, written at the time when the successful printer had reached the highest civic dignity (being the only one of that trade who became Lord Mayor of London), Swift says, "Alderman Barber was my old acquaintance; I got him two or three employments when I had credit with the Queen's ministers." The alderman was not only one of the most violent of Tories, but a Jacobite. Travelling in Italy, he was introduced to the Pretender, and was arrested on his return home. His memory is preserved by the ostentatious inscription which he placed upon the monument of Butler, erected in Westminster Abbey at his expense. There was another patron of genius who, in the same manner, desired to link his fame to that of Milton. An epigram, ascribed to Pope, which he proposed to be placed on the blank scroll under Shakspere's bust,

has not yet been efficient in warning off trespassers upon this hallowed ground:—

> "Thus Britain lov'd me, and preserv'd my fame,
> Safe from a Barber's or a Benson's name."

The elder Jacob, in 1706, had made his advances to Pope in a plain tradesman-like fashion, which the great publishers of later times may probably deem too humble. He had been shown the manuscript of a Pastoral, which he thought "extremely fine," and he thus concludes his brief note of solicitation: "I remember I have formerly seen you in my shop, and am sorry I did not improve my acquaintance with you. If you design your poem for the press, no one shall be more careful in printing it, nor no one can give greater encouragement to it than, Sir, &c." Pope's Pastorals were published in 'Tonson's Miscellany' in 1709. The young poet, however, was not constant; and he committed the 'Essay on Criticism' —published at first anonymously—to a bookseller of no great celebrity, of the name of Lewis. Its sale was at first slow. It was attacked by Dennis and praised by Addison. Tonson had to bear a more marked desertion by Pope than the choice of a new publisher for the Essay. Bernard Lintott had set up a Miscellany which was to be a rival to Tonson's, and here, in 1712, appeared the first sketch of the 'Rape of the Lock.' As the success of Tonson had been founded upon Dryden, so that of Lintott was established by his connexion with Pope. Yet Tonson and Pope were not upon unfriendly terms. Spence has recorded several anecdotes, in which they are

introduced as conversing as intimate acquaintances only converse. For example: "Ay, Mr. Tonson, he was *ultimus Romanorum* (with a sigh)—speaking of poor Mr. Congreve, who died a year or two before."

The Bernard Lintott, whom Pope has made famous, was a bookseller, described in his quaint style by John Dunton: "He lately published 'A Collection of Tragic Tales, &c.,' by which I perceive he is angry with the world, and scorns it into the bargain; and I cannot blame him; for Durfey (his author) both treats and esteems it as it deserves—too hard a task for those whom it flatters, or perhaps for Bernard himself, should the world ever change its humour and *grin* upon him." Mr. Durfey's comic songs were probably more profitable to the bookseller than his tragic tales. Of Durfey's reputation amongst country squires there is a capital description by Pope, in a letter written in 1710 to his town friend Cromwell: "I assure you I am looked upon in the neighbourhood for a very sober, well-disposed person; no great hunter, indeed, but a great esteemer of the noble sport, and only unhappy in my want of constitution for that and drinking. They all say 'tis pity I am so sickly, and I think 'tis pity they are so healthy. But I say nothing that may destroy their good opinion of me. I have not quoted one Latin author since I came down, but have learned without book a song of Mr. Thomas Durfey's, who is your only poet of tolerable reputation in this country. He makes all the merriment in our entertainments, and, but for him, there would be so miserable a dearth of catches, that I fear they would (*sans cérémonie*) put either the parson or me upon making some for 'em.

Any man, of any quality, is heartily welcome to the best toping-table of our gentry, who can roundly hum out some fragments or rhapsodies of his works; so that in the same manner as it was said of Homer to his detractors, 'What! dares any man speak against him who has given so many men to *eat*?' (meaning the rhapsodists, who lived by repeating his verses,) so may it be said of Mr. Durfey to his detractors, 'Dares any one despise him, who has made so many men *drink*?'"

Of the course of the negotiations between Pope and Lintott for the publication of the translation of Homer's 'Iliad' there is no distinct record. The terms of the contract are as well known as any fact in the history of letters. Of these terms, which made Pope independent, I may presently say a few words, as illustrative of the publishing risks of a century and a half ago. Meanwhile let me look at the shadow of the bookseller, as it was sketched by the poet in a letter of 1715. In 'The Postboy' of June 4 of that year, it was announced that the first volume of Mr. Pope's translation will be ready to be delivered to the subscribers on Monday next, "by Bernard Lintott, bookseller, at the Cross Keys between the Temple Gates in Fleet-street, where the several pieces Mr. Pope has published may be had."

The celebrated letter of Pope to the Earl of Burlington, of which Lintott is the subject, has been so repeatedly printed that I cannot venture to reprint it. It is assigned by Mr. Thackeray to August, 1714. Mr. Carruthers, in his excellent 'Life of Pope,' mentions the journey to Oxford as occurring "shortly after the

delivery of the first volume" of the Homer. Upon the face of the letter this would appear to be correct, although Mr. Nichols, in his 'Literary Anecdotes' (vol. viii. p. 170), calls it an "undated letter," and ascribes it to 1725, when the publication of the Homer was concluded. The letter, however, could not have been "evidently intended for publication," as Mr. Carruthers infers. When the reputation of the bookseller was so closely associated with that of the author, it is not likely that Pope's exquisite vein of satire would be publicly discharged upon Lintott. When he figured in 'The Dunciad' their relations were very different.

Mr. Pope is on his way to Oxford. His journey is made on horseback. He was of delicate frame, but of active habits—"a lively little creature," as he has described himself in a paper in 'The Guardian,' "with long arms and legs." His deformity was a perpetual topic of ridicule by his enemies, and it was bitterly said of him by an insincere friend "that he had a crooked mind in a crooked body." "The enterprising Mr. Lintott, the redoubtable rival of Mr. Tonson," overtakes him in Windsor forest. He had heard that Mr. Pope was going to Oxford, and would, as his bookseller, accompany him thither. "Where did you get your horse?" said Mr. Pope. He got it of "his publisher." * "That rogue my printer disappointed me. I hoped to put him in good humour by a treat at the tavern of a brown fricassée of rabbits,

* This is not very intelligible, according to our modern use of the word "publisher," which would make Lintott himself the "publisher," and not some agent or servant employed by him.

which cost ten shillings, with two quarts of wine, besides my conversation." They proceeded on the road, when Mr. Lintott begins to talk in this manner: "Now, damn them! What if they should put it into the newspaper how you and I went together to Oxford? What would I care? If I should go down into Sussex they would say I was gone to the Speaker; but what of that? If my son were big enough to go on with the business, by G—d, I would keep as good company as old Jacob." Mr. Pope having observed that the bookseller sat uneasy on his saddle, Bernard says, "It is nothing; I can bear it well enough." But he had a keen eye for doing business: "Since we have the day before us, methinks it would be very pleasant for you to rest awhile under the woods." When they were alighted he proceeds: "See, here, what a mighty pretty Horace I have in my pocket. What if you amused yourself in turning an ode till we mount again? Lord! if you pleased, what a clever miscellany might you make at leisure hours!" Mr. Pope thinks he might turn an ode if they rode on. There is silence for a full hour, when Mr. Lintott stops short and breaks out—"Well, Sir, how far have you gone?" "Seven miles," answers Mr. Pope. Then come some revelations from the bookseller about his translators. "Those," said he, "are the saddest pack of rogues in the world; in a hungry fit they'll swear they understand all the languages in the universe. I have known one of them take down a Greek book upon my counter and cry, 'Ah! this is Hebrew,' and must read it from the latter end. By G—d, I can never be sure of these fellows, for I neither understand

Greek, Latin, French, nor Italian myself." John Dunton had made something like the same discovery before Bernard Lintott: "I always thought their great concern lay more in *how much a sheet*, than in any generous respect they bore to the Commonwealth of Learning; and, indeed, the learning itself of these gentlemen lies very often in as little room as their honesty; though they will pretend to have studied you six or seven years in the Bodleian Library, to have turned over the Fathers, and to have read and digested the whole compass both of human and ecclesiastic history—when, alas! they have never been able to understand a single page of Saint Cyprian, and cannot tell you whether the Fathers lived before or after Christ." But great Bernard's method of dealing with the critics is as original as it is edifying. He could silence the rich ones by a sheet of the blotted manuscript, which cost him nothing: "They will go about with it to their acquaintance and pretend they had it from the author, who submitted it to their correction." The poor ones were a little more costly. A lean man, that looked like a good scholar, came into his shop, and turning over the Homer, shook his head, shrugged up his shoulders, and pished at every line of it. "Mr. Lintott," he said, "I am very sorry you should be at the expense of this great book; I am really concerned on your account." Mrs. Lintott calls to dinner. The critic is invited to eat a piece of beef, with a slice of pudding. "'Mr. Lintott, I do not say but Mr. Pope, if he would condescend to advise with men of learning'—'Sir, the pudding is upon the table, if you please to go in.' My critic complies;

he comes to a taste of your poetry, and tells me in the same breath that the book is commendable and the pudding excellent."

In the spring which followed the autumnal journey to Oxford, there commenced the ignoble and deadly warfare between Alexander Pope and Edmund Curll, of Fleet-street, bookseller, which amused the town for years, but which, to the admirers of a great genius, is painful to look back upon. It is as startling to meet with anything like a commendation of this notorious publisher, as to find that the world has been deceived in its moral estimate of Richard the Third, Henry the Eighth, or Lord Bacon. Mr. John Nichols thus writes of the "dauntless," whose name has become a brief but emphatic mode of characterising any bookseller whose vocation is altogether disreputable: "The memory of Edmund Curll has been transmitted to posterity with an obloquy more severe than he deserved. Whatever were his demerits in having occasionally published works that the present age would very properly consider too licentious, he certainly deserves commendation for his industry in preserving our National Remains. And it may perhaps be added, that he did not publish a single volume but what, amidst a profusion of base metal, contained some precious ore, some valuable reliques, which future collectors could nowhere else have found."* Browne Willis gave him a sort of certificate that "he deserves to be encouraged by us all who are well-wishers to this study"—that of English

* 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. i. p. 456.

Antiquities—"no bookseller in town having been so curious as he." But the satirists have had far more influence than the antiquaries in presenting posterity with the shadow of this old bookseller; and we must even take his unprepossessing outward man, as described by a contemporary who had no personal motive for damning to everlasting fame, as Pope had:—"Curll was in person very tall and thin—an ungainly, awkward, white-faced man. His eyes were a light grey—large, projecting, goggle, and purblind. He was splay-footed and baker-kneed." Thus Mr. Thomas Amory sketches the figure and countenance of Curll, in his curious and interesting 'John Buncle.' This book is, in many particulars, autobiographical; and as few now-a-days will trouble themselves to read the narrative of his tea-drinkings with the most beautiful and learned ladies of the Unitarian persuasion, I will extract his description of the character and doings of Curll—as true a representation, I may well believe, as ever was drawn:—

"He had a good natural understanding, and was well acquainted with more than the title-pages of books. He talked well on some subjects. He was not an infidel, as Mrs. Rowe misrepresents him in one of her letters to Lady Hartford (afterwards Duchess of Somerset). He told me it was quite evident to him that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament contained a real revelation: there is for it a rational, a natural, a traditionary, and a supernatural testimony, which rendered it quite certain to him. He said he no more doubted the truth of the Christian

religion than he did the existence of an independent supreme Creator; but he did not believe the expositions given by the divines. . . . .

"He was a debauchee to the last degree, and so injurious to society, that by filling his translations with wretched notes, forged letters, and bad pictures, he raised the price of a four shilling book to ten. Thus, in particular, he managed Burnet's 'Archæology.' And when I told him he was very culpable in this and other articles he sold, his answer was, 'What would I have him to do? He was a bookseller; his translators in pay lay three in a bed at the Pewter Platter inn, in Holborn, and he and they were for ever at work to deceive the public.' He likewise printed the lewdest things. He lost his ears for 'The Nun in her Smock,' and another thing. As to drink, he was too fond of money to spend any in making himself happy that way; but at another's expense he would drink every day till he was quite blind and as incapable of self-motion as a block. This was Edmund Curll. But he died at last as great a penitent (I think in the year 1748) as ever expired. I mention this to his glory.

"As Curll knew the world well and was acquainted with several extraordinary characters, he was of great use to me at my first coming to town, as I knew nobody nor any place. He gave me the true characters of many I saw; told me whom I should avoid and with whom I might be free. He brought me to the playhouses and gave me a judicious account of every actor. He understood these things well. No man could talk better on theatrical subjects. He

brought me likewise to Sadler's Wells; to the night-cellars, and to Tom King's, the famous night-house at Covent Garden. As he was very knowing and well known at such places, he soon made me as wise as himself in these branches of learning; and, in short, in the space of a month I was as well acquainted in London as if I had been there for years. My kind preceptor spared no pains in lecturing. But what of all things I thought most wonderful was the company I saw at the Sieur Curll's. As he was intimate with all the high —— [read 'pretty horsebreakers'] in town, many of them frequented his shop to buy his dialogues and other lively books. Some of these girls he often asked to dine with him, and then I was sure to be his guest."

After this impartial testimony to the character of Mr. Curll, I am ready to acquit Pope of being a malicious libeller. When in 1728-9 he gibbeted Curll in 'The Dunciad,' and told us in a note to the Second Book of that poem that he "carried the trade many lengths beyond what it had ever before arrived at, and was the envy and admiration of all his profession," the shadow of "this eminent man" would ever present itself to "the trade" with a pillory marshalling them the way which they should go, if they would attain the distinction which he had so recently arrived at. His prosecution for printing two obscene books was in the first year of George II., 1727. In the indictment he is thus described: "*Homo iniquus et sceleratus, nequiter machinans et intendens bonos mores subditorum hujus regni corrumpere.*"

In the spring, then, of 1716, there is a remarkable

meeting of three persons at the Swan Tavern, in Fleet-street. Mr. Pope enters, accompanied by Mr. Lintott. Mr. Curll has been sent for, and, according to the custom of "the trade," wine is ordered. Mr. Pope has to complain of a publication entitled 'The Court Poems, published faithfully, as they were found in a pocket-book, taken up in Westminster Hall.' Associated with Curll as publisher was Mr. J. Roberts, in Warwick-street, who in an advertisement prefixed insinuates that the coffee-house critics assign them either to a Lady of Quality, Mr. Gay, or the Translator of Homer. Curll thought fit to publish an account of this meeting: "My brother Lintott drank his half-pint of old hock, Mr. Pope his half-pint of sack, and I the same quantity of an emetic potion." He was afterwards more direct in his accusation, holding that his half-pint of canary had been poisoned by the malevolent poet. In a few weeks appeared 'A full and true account of a horrid and barbarous revenge by poison, on the body of Mr. Edmund Curll, bookseller, with a faithful copy of his last will and testament.' Dennis took up the wondrous tale, and characterises the charge against Pope, which he receives as veracious, as "so black, so double, and so perfidious, that perhaps a villain who is capable of breaking open a house is not capable of that." At that time Swift was the intimate friend of Pope, and had taught him some of that grossness which makes their filth as hateful as the worst obscenities of which Curll was the degraded publisher. The 'Full and true Account' is unreadable at the present day.

It is a relief to turn awhile from the fierce contro-

versies and the vulgar lampoons of the great writer, to view him pursuing his proper work, and receiving its just reward. In 1712, when Pope was in his twenty-fifth year, he commenced the translation of 'The Iliad.' He finished it in 1718. Like Dryden's 'Virgil,' it was published by subscription, at a guinea a volume, each of the six volumes being delivered to the subscribers as the printing was completed. The subscription price was more than usually high; but through the unremitted exertions of the poet's friends, literary and political, six hundred and fifty-four copies were delivered at the original rate. The highest bidder for the publication of 'The Iliad' was Bernard Lintott. He agreed to provide, at his own expense, all the subscription and presentation copies, and, in addition, to pay the author two hundred pounds per volume. This was the boldest offer for a copyright ever made, in the days when great authors looked rather more to places and pensions than to the liberality of booksellers. Mr. Lintott "was not a genteel man," as Pope said of Dryden; but he had munificent notions of the proper wages of the skilled workmen of literature, such as were rarely understood half a century, or even a century, later. Pope realised five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds by this his most continuous labour. Lintott believed that an edition in folio would reimburse him, and that he might then go to the great body of readers—such as bought the 'Spectator'—to make a large profit out of cheap editions. His plan was anticipated by the piratical dealers, who caused a cheap edition to be printed in Holland. Lintott met this unjust proceeding like

a man of sense and spirit. He immediately brought out a duodecimo edition, at half-a-crown a volume. In the Annals of Mr. Bowyer's Press we find, in 1720, "The six volumes of Pope's 'Homer,' finely printed from an Elzevir letter." In a former work I said, "It may well be doubted if Pope would have made five thousand three hundred pounds if he had originally gone, without the quarto subscription process, to the buyers of duodecimos. Perhaps even the duodecimos would not have sold extensively without the reputation of the quartos. There was no great reading public to make a fortune for the poet out of small profits upon large sales."* I perhaps should have said that it might have been doubted whether the poet would have *speedily* realised his little fortune. Mr. Singer, the editor of 'Spence's Anecdotes,' states that Pope "was at first apprehensive that the contract might ruin Lintott, and endeavoured to dissuade him from thinking any more of it. The event, however, proved quite the reverse. The success of the work was so unparalleled as at once to enrich the bookseller, and prove a productive estate to his family." The fortunes of the family were certainly improving since the time when Dunton wrote of Bernard, in allusion to Durfey, the music-master, as his leading genius—"He, I dare engage, will never want an author of *sol-fa*." In Humphrey Wanley's Diary of January, 1726, there is this entry: "Young Mr. Lintott, the bookseller, came inquiring after *arms*, as belonging to his father, mother, and other relations,

* 'Once upon a Time,' edit. 1865, p. 281.

who now, it seems, want to turn *gentlefolks*. I could find none of their names." Young Mr. Lintott, the bookseller, was Henry, the son of Bernard, and succeeded to his father's business.

The dignity of the system of publishing books by subscription was, perhaps, sufficiently vindicated by the success of Dryden's 'Virgil,' of Steele's republication of 'The Tatler,' of Pope's 'Iliad,' and his 'Shakespeare.' Whilst small authors, who adopted this mode of sale, were frequently little higher than the begging-letter writers, the occasional grandeur of the subscription plan is illustrated by the fact that the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch, Oxford, entered into an engagement with Lintott, in 1715, that he should print by subscription the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, dividing the profits with the Dean and Chapter, for the purpose of finishing the Peckwater Quadrangle. Mr. Urry, a student of Christchurch, had obtained a patent for the exclusive printing of his edition, which he assigned, in 1714, to Bernard Lintott. But this ingenious Scotchman dying in 1715, his executor, in conjunction with the authorities of Christchurch, concluded this agreement with the bookseller, it having been the intention of Mr. Urry to devote 500*l.* to the purpose that the Dean and Chapter subsequently contemplated. This edition was issued in folio in 1721. Whether their share of the profits realised the fourteen hundred pounds which the Dean and Chapter anticipated does not appear. It may be hoped that the success of the subscription was not so large as long to deter other scholars from editorial rivalry. The editor had strange

notions of the licence that might be taken with an early English author, which can only be paralleled by the famous Perkins Shakspere. Till Mr. Tyrwhitt took the work in hand there had been no competent editor of Chaucer.

The attempted rivalry of Tickell with Pope in the translation of Homer introduces us to one of the most painful chapters in the history of literary quarrels. It broke up the friendship of Pope with Addison. How much better and happier the irascible poet might have been under the leading of Addison, instead of that of Swift, can scarcely now be predicated. It was not to be. Three days after the announcement that the first volume of Mr. Pope's translation of Homer is finished, appeared this advertisement in the same paper: "To-morrow will be published the first book of Homer's 'Iliad,' translated by *Mr. Tickell.* Printed for Jacob Tonson, at Shakspeare's Head, against Katherine-street, in the Strand." In Spence's 'Anecdotes,' Pope is recorded as saying of Addison, "He translated the first book of the 'Iliad' that appeared as Tickell's; and Steele has blurted it out in his angry preface against Tickell." The editor of Spence says that it was in a Dedication to Congreve of 'The Drummer.' Mr. Singer adds: "Mr. Nichols, in a note to his 'Collection of Poems,' vol. iv., says, that Mr. Watts, the printer, told a friend of his "that the Translation of the First Book of the 'Iliad' was in Tickell's handwriting, but much corrected and interlined by Addison." Lintott seems to have been perfectly aware of the temper in which Pope would receive a copy of Tickell's translation,

which he sent to him, immediately on its appearance, with this note: "You have Mr. Tickell's book to divert one hour. It is already condemned here; and the malice and juggle at Button's is the conversation of those who have spare moments from politics." Pope says of himself that he was heated by what he had heard, and wrote to Addison, that if he were to speak severely of him in return for his behaviour, it should be something in the following manner. He then subjoined the first sketch of the twenty-two lines, concluding with—

"Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

Addison, Pope says, used him very civilly ever after. We have no information whether the quarrel of the great writers extended to the publishers of the rival translations. There is an anecdote in the supplement to Spence, from which it appears that they long continued rivals. The authority for this anecdote is Dr. Young himself. "Tonson and Lintott were both candidates for printing some work of Dr. Young's. He answered both their letters in the same morning, and in his hurry misdirected them. When Lintott opened that which came to him he found it begin: 'That Bernard Lintott is so great a scoundrel, that,' &c. It must have been very amusing to have seen him in his rage; he was a great sputtering fellow."

Pope returned to his old bookseller, Tonson, when he published his edition of Shakespeare. It was not a success. Of the six quarto volumes, only about six hundred copies were sold; and the remainder of an impression of seven hundred and fifty were disposed

of at a reduced price. Pope received a small remuneration for his editorial labours, 217*l.* 12*s.* His Preface was a masterly composition, pregnant with good sense, and elegant in style; but the character of the age, in which the higher art of the poet was imperfectly appreciated, is reflected in Pope's conception of Shakspere's genius. Theobald, three years after, produced his edition, having previously published a pamphlet, entitled 'Shakspeare Restored; or a Specimen of the many Errors, as well committed as unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late edition.' This attack, and Theobald's greater success, gave him that place upon the throne of Dulness which was afterwards occupied by Cibber. Lintott was the publisher of the subscription edition of 'The Odyssey,' in 1725. Pope, in announcing his proposals for this translation, avowed that he had been assisted by friends. He had undertaken the translation, but did not claim to be the sole translator. Mr. Pope, the *undertaker*, became a byeword amongst his numerous unfriends. Pope gained nearly three thousand pounds by this operation; but Lintott was disappointed; and pretending to have discovered something fraudulent in the agreement, threatened a suit in Chancery. Pope quarrelled, of course, with him, and finally elevated him to his ignoble position in 'The Dunciad.' That Curll came in for the greater honours of that poem is to be attributed to his share in the mystery of the publication of Pope's Letters, about which nearly as much has been written as about "Junius." It is beside the purpose of this little volume to enter upon this debatable ground. I

am content to refer to the lucid account of the affair by Mr. Carruthers; to the elaborate discussions of the elder D'Israeli; and to the desire of Mr. Roscoe to vindicate Pope from the imputation of Johnson:—"Being desirous to print his own Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what in this country has been done very rarely, he contrived an appearance of compulsion; that when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published he might decently and defensively publish them himself." Pope had an awkward controversialist in Curll. His impudence was at once spear and shield. One specimen may suffice of his mode of attack and defence: "I have engraven a new plate of Mr. Pope's head from Mr. Jervas's painting; and likewise intend to hang him up in effigy for a sign to all spectators of his falsehood and my own veracity, which I will always maintain under the Scots' motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*."

In the publication of the first edition of 'The Dunciad,' in 1729, there was employed that mystification which Pope and Swift delighted in as the herald of their attacks upon their adversaries. It professed to be printed originally in Dublin in 1728; but this was really a reprint of a London edition. This was the prelude to an enlarged quarto edition, which was soon pirated. Pope went to the Court of Chancery to obtain an injunction. He was not successful, as the printer could not prove any property. The public curiosity was stimulated by these law proceedings, as was their manifest intent. Pope then assigned his copyright to Lords Burlington, Oxford, and Bathurst,

and they re-assigned it to Lawton Gilliver, who had become Pope's bookseller, "with the sole right and liberty of printing the same." There is a graphic account of the excitement produced by the publication of 'The Dunciad.' It was held to have been written by Savage, but is with much probability attributed to Pope himself.

"On the day the book was first vended a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay, cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of 'The Dunciad.' On the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great an effort to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public! There was no stopping a torrent with a finger, so out it came. Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The Dunces (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs to consult of hostilities against the author. One wrote a letter to a great Minister, that Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the Government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy; with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted. Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece; the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in its stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass,

by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of 'The Dunciad.'"

I might here close this chapter, and leave the shadows of the old booksellers of 'The Dunciad' as not quite fit to call up in decent company. "The high heroic games" in which Lintott and Curll are the chief antagonists are not redolent of attar of roses. The six lines which describe the person and action of the "huge Lintott" may be extracted with safety:—

> "As when a dab-chick waddles through the copse
> On feet and wings, and flies, and wades, and hops;
> So lab'ring on, with shoulders, hands, and head,
> Wide as a windmill all his figure spread,
> With arms expanded, Bernard rows his state,
> And left-legg'd Jacob seems to emulate."

Another bookseller is introduced in even a more filthy contest with Curll, Thomas Osborne. Pope deposed Chapman, after the original edition of 'The Dunciad,' and introduced Osborne, who, according to Johnson, was so dull that he could not feel the poet's gross satire. He properly belongs to a few years later, when the ragged scholar who walked from Lichfield into London, with his friend David Garrick, had to earn his scanty wages under this arrogant old bookseller, and has told how he had dealt with him: "Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him." Happily there were many in this busy age of letters who were worthy dealers in wares literary. One of these was the great-nephew of the first Jacob Tonson. His eulogium by Steevens, in his advertisement to his edition of Shakspeare, in 1773, offers an example

worthy of imitation to all who desire to regard the publisher as something higher and worthier than the ordinary John o' the Scales:—

"To suppose that a person employed in an extensive trade lived in a state of indifference to loss and gain would be to conceive a character incredible and romantic; but it may be justly said of Mr. Tonson that he had enlarged his mind beyond solicitude about petty losses, and refined it from the desire of unreasonable profit. He was willing to admit those with whom he contracted to the just advantage of their own labours; and had never learned to consider the author as an under-agent to the bookseller. The wealth which he inherited, or acquired, he enjoyed like a man conscious of the dignity of a profession subservient to learning. His domestic life was elegant, and his charity was liberal. His manners were soft, and his conversation was delicate; nor is, perhaps, any quality in him more to be censured than that reserve which confined his acquaintance to a small number, and made his example less useful, as it was less extensive. He was the last commercial name of a family which will be long remembered; and if Horace thought it not improper to convey the Sosii to posterity; if rhetoric suffered no dishonour from Quintilian's dedication to Trypho; let it not be thought that we disgrace Shakspeare by appending to his works the name of Tonson."

The house in which the first Tonson carried on business in his latter years was, as described in the imprint of his books, at "Shakspeare's Head, over against Catherine Street in the Strand." That house,

No. 141, was remarkable as the shop of three of the most eminent amongst the old booksellers.* Here the elder Jacob might have looked out upon "the furies of the football war," which Gay has so well described in his 'Trivia.' Here Andrew Millar concluded, over many a hospitable entertainment in his upper-rooms (for the old days of booksellers' bargains at taverns were over), his treaties with Fielding and Thomson, with Hume and Robertson. Here Thomas Cadell smiled with honest exultation as he wrote to Gibbon, to tell him how wonderful was the success of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' Illustrious shadows flitted about that venerable house, which, long since rebuilt, is now an insurance-office.

* See Peter Cunningham's 'Handbook of London.'

CHAPTER VI.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

IN the first year of the reign of James II., 1685, an ingenious artisan—a joiner, who was a good draughtsman, and understood architecture—hastily left his business in London, and took up his abode somewhere in Derbyshire. The execution of the Duke of Monmouth had terrified this humble man, whose name was Richardson; for he had received favours from the unhappy son of Charles II., and also from the Earl of Shaftesbury. He was suspected in that awful time; and, had he not found a secure hiding-place, would probably have been one of the sufferers whom Chief-Justice Jeffreys sent to the gallows, or to a life of field-labour in America. In 1689 Samuel Richardson was born. Though concealment from political motives was no longer necessary as regarded his father, he has carefully forborne to mention the precise place in Derbyshire where he first saw the light, and where he passed his childhood.

In 1753, the Rev. J. Stinstra, a Dutch minister, who had translated 'Clarissa,' wrote to this famous novelist:—"May I ask you—(although I am too bold my letter blushes not)—in what kind of life you have been conversant from your youth? Have you, as

fame reports, been constantly employed in bookselling? Whence did you attain so accurate a knowledge of the various dispositions of nature, and of the manners of mankind? What was the first occasion of your application to writing? By what means have you compiled your immortal works? Did they flow from your invention? or, had you a model of a true action before your eyes, which you adorned with additional colourings?" To questions so searching and so flattering as these the complacent author replies without reserve, as to the facts of his early life. Out of these revelations let me call up the shadow of a precocious boy, in his obscure home in Derbyshire.

It is a summer afternoon; school is over; the village boys are playing at ball, or kite-flying, on the green, in front of a row of decent cottages. A matron, with laughing girls about her, looks out of her woodbine-covered lattice, and exclaims, "There is that poor little *Gravity* again, moping about by himself. Bring him in, Susan, and let us hear some of his fine stories." Susan runs out, and salutes the little fellow with, "Mr. *Serious*, why don't you play like the rest of your schoolfellows?" "I don't want to play, Miss." "Well, then, come in with me, and you shall have a glass of gooseberry-wine." Sammy Richardson takes her hand, and he, seated on a low stool, soon begins to tell a story of a servant-man preferred by a fine young lady for his goodness, to a lord who was a libertine. Two or three summers, and two or three winters, pass away, and still the little boy is in great request; for when half-a-dozen young

women are gathered together in a neighbourly fashion to work with their needles, Sammy is reading to them, or telling fresh stories, "all of which carried with them an useful moral." He had a talent for letter-writing, from his earliest youth; and when scarcely eleven years old, got into some trouble for writing spontaneously an epistle, full of Scripture texts, to a widow of fifty, who pretended to a zeal for religion, and was a constant frequenter of church ordinances, but who was continually fomenting quarrels amongst all her acquaintances by backbiting and scandal. This was dangerous work for the critical boy, as his handwriting was known. He has attained his thirteenth year, having made no acquisitions of knowledge out of the range of the few English books that are within his reach. But he was gathering up materials, in a strange way, for the exercise of his future art. Let me view him as he is walking by the side of a streamlet under a Derbyshire hill, in earnest conversation with one of his "young women of taste and reading." She it is who is eloquent in talk; he is only an attentive listener. Another evening comes, and he is reading to her a manuscript, which she carefully puts into her pocket, and smiles a sweet farewell. Are they lovers? Has the bashful boy thus early declared his affection? It is not so; it ought not to be so. In a few weeks young Samuel has a private meeting with another young lady, and there is a similar earnest conference—sighs and tears on the maiden's part—silent acquiescence from the youth. Autumn succeeds to summer; the hedges and woods are getting bare of leaves; but far away

from prying eyes, a third damsel is wandering with the same youthful listener. It is not one meeting only with either of them at which these conferences are carried on. There is a mystery. When that boy has become a man of sixty-five he explains it to his reverend Dutch correspondent. "I was not more than thirteen when three of these young women, unknown to each other, having a high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lovers' letters: nor did any one of them ever know I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either taken or given, at the very time that the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection, and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing this word or that expression to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her lover's fervour, and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, 'I cannot tell you what to write, but,' her heart on her lips, 'you cannot write too kindly.'" Mr. Stinstra expresses his opinion that the novelist is indebted to this secretaryship to young women for the characters he had drawn of his heroines. "This opportunity did little more for me," replies Mr. Richardson, "at so tender an age, than to point, as I may say, or lead my inquiries, as I grew up, into the knowledge of the female heart; and, knowing something of that, I could not be an utter stranger to that of man."

I must descend with Master Samuel from these altitudes, and follow him into the dead level of common life. In 1706 he was bound apprentice to Mr. John Wilde, described by Dunton as having "a very noble printing-house in Aldersgate Street." Looking back upon this period, Richardson says, "I served a diligent seven years to it; to a master who grudged every hour to me that tended not to his profit; even of those times of leisure and diversion which the refractoriness of my fellow-apprentices obliged him to allow them, and were usually allowed by other masters to their apprentices. I stole from the hours of rest and relaxation my reading times for improvement of my mind. I took care that even my candle was of my own purchasing, that I might not, in the most trifling instance, make my master a sufferer." That hard taskmaster called the lad "the pillar of his house." For six or seven years after the expiration of his apprenticeship Richardson continued at his trade, as a compositor, a reader, and part of the time as an overseer. Of frugal habits, he was at length enabled, having taken up his freedom in 1719, to become a master printer, in a small way, in a Court in Fleet Street. He afterwards removed to Salisbury Square, where we have seen Thomas Gent employed by him in 1723. He was truly then "the ingenious Mr. Richardson;" for he had become something more than a careful printer in his connexion with booksellers. He compiled Indexes, and wrote Prefaces, and what he terms "honest Dedications." His knowledge of the heart of man was probably extended by his acquaintance with the clever and profligate Duke of Wharton; for

whom he printed 'The True Briton,' under conditions that must have been embarrassing to its conductors. The printer stipulated that he should not be concerned in the typographical production of any papers that might endanger his own safety. The earliest letter of his published correspondence is with Aaron Hill, to whom he writes: "As to my silence I have been at one time exceedingly busy in getting ready some volumes of Journals, to entitle myself to a payment which yet I never had,—no, not to the value of a shilling, though the debt is upwards of three thousand pounds, and though I have pressed for it, and been exceedingly pressed for the want of it." The patronage of Mr. Speaker Onslow gave him this very unsatisfactory piece of business. Delays in payment for work to honest traders, and the encouragement of every sort of jobbery and fraud amongst those who would bribe the underlings, was, during most part of the eighteenth century, and sometimes later, the usual occupation of under secretaries and auditors of public accounts.

Thus Samuel Richardson pursued "the even tenour of his way," till 1740, when two of "the trade," Mr. Rivington and Mr. Osborne, proposed to him to undertake for them a literary work, rather more interesting than Indexes and Dedications. This, in a letter to Aaron Hill, is his own account of an occurrence which not only changed the ordinary course of the honest printer's life, but had a marked influence on the future of English literature: "Two booksellers, my particular friends, entreated me to write for them a little volume of Letters, in a common style,

on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves. 'Will it be any harm,' said I, 'in a piece you want to be written so low, if we should instruct them how they should think and act in common cases, as well as indite?' They were the more urgent with me to begin the little volume for this hint. I set about it; and, in the progress of it, wrote two or three letters to instruct handsome girls who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue. And hence sprung 'Pamela.'*

Without some acquaintance with the general character of the light reading of the time of George II., it would not be easy to comprehend the unbounded admiration with which the first work of Richardson was received. With a few exceptions, the novels were either excessively dull or grossly licentious. Richardson, in great measure, avoided the dullness; and his professed object was to inculcate moral lessons. His story was that of 'Pamela; or Virtue rewarded.' Thus it was that in an age when the chief reward of virtue was held to consist in worldly advantages—in riches, in the command of comforts and luxuries, in a high social position, in fine houses and equipages—that the praises of the high morality of Richardson's novel by his contemporaries were in some degree misapplied. 'Pamela' was recommended from the pulpit. One critic holds that if all other books were to be burnt,

* 'Correspondence of Samuel Richardson,' vol. i. p. 52 of Life, by Mrs. Barbauld.

this book, next to the Bible, ought to be preserved. Another says, he would bring up his son to be virtuous by giving him 'Pamela' as soon as he could read. One eminent man, indeed, writes candidly to the author, that he understands the ladies complain that they cannot read the letters without blushing. Richardson, from the very nature of his story, appears, in the general license of his time, to have fallen into the error upon which he is so bitter in letters full of contemptuous reprobation of Fielding and Sterne. But the moral of the story was not an exalted one. Mrs. Barbauld has truly said that "a novel written on the side of virtue was considered as a new experiment." It perfectly succeeded; for the virtue was not too refined or disinterested to be above the comprehension of the worldly-minded or the uneducated. A beautiful girl—the daughter of humble parents of true respectability, honest, loving, patient, and pious—goes forth from her home to be a servant in a rich family. Her master is drawn as one of the coarsest of libertines; proud, selfish, of no tenderness of nature; a slave to his passionate impulses; and yet, after attempts which could scarcely be called seduction, she cherishes designs, amidst all her virtuous resistance, to become honourably allied to him, and she completes her purpose. Nevertheless, there is so much of truth and nature in the conduct of the story that we may have perfect confidence in the anecdote told by Sir John Herschel, of the blacksmith of a village who read 'Pamela' to his neighbours collected round his anvil. When the hero and heroine were brought together to live long and happily, according to the

most approved rules, the congregation were so delighted as to raise a great shout, and procuring the church keys, actually set the parish bells ringing. This was a just tribute to the genius of the author, but perhaps as much so to the very intelligible sort of poetical justice which was the moral of the purity of the daughter of Gaffer and Gammer Andrews.

Two years after the appearance of Richardson's first novel, Fielding published 'History and Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his friend Abraham Adams,' being "brother to the illustrious Pamela whose virtue is at present so famous." Richardson appears never to have forgiven this burlesque; but it was very soon forgotten by the public as an attempt to ridicule his overwrought sentiment, and was received as a genuine picture of real life in its every-day aspects. Richardson used to say that had he not known Fielding, he should have believed the author of 'Joseph Andrews' to have been an ostler. But there was something higher in this novel than descriptions of inns, and stage-coaches, and country squires. The friend of Joseph Andrews—Mr. Abraham Adams—who took his cup of ale in the squire's kitchen, and who, in the dusk of an evening, riding into an inn, sat down in the common public room and called for a pipe of tobacco—he is something higher than Richardson has described him: "Parson Young sat for Fielding's Parson Adams, a man he knew, and only made a little more absurd than he is known to be."* He, to my mind, is one of

* 'Correspondence of Richardson,' vol. iv. p. 60.

the three great English worthies, who may take his due place with Sir Roger de Coverley and Uncle Toby. The handsome Joseph—with his bravery, his true modesty, his constancy—is of a higher order of virtue than that of his reputed sister. Yet Thackeray is scarcely just when he says: "Fielding, no doubt, began to write this novel in ridicule of 'Pamela,' for which work one can understand the hearty contempt and antipathy which such an athletic and boisterous genius as Fielding's must have entertained. He couldn't do otherwise than laugh at the puny Cockney bookseller, pouring out endless volumes of sentimental twaddle, and hold him up to scorn as a moll-coddle and a milksop." The natures of the two novelists were antagonistic, as were their education and their habits. Yet, I doubt if, when Fielding proposed to write a book in ridicule of 'Pamela,' he disliked and utterly scorned, and laughed at the author. Thackeray is nearer the truth when he says: "Richardson's sickening antipathy for Harry Fielding is quite as natural as the other's laughter and contempt at the sentimentalist." "If," as the author of 'The English Humorists' says, "Richardson disliked Fielding's works quite honestly," it is some extenuation of his prejudices that "the puny Cockney bookseller" had been an early and a kind friend to the brilliant and dissipated Etonian, whose extravagance compelled him to write plays and miscellanies for a subsistence, long before he became famous as a novelist.

Richardson's 'Clarissa' was begun to be published in 1747. Of his three novels, this is unquestionably

the one in which he displays a power that can scarcely be called by any other name than genius. He tells Mr. Stinstra that he "almost accidentally slid into the writing of 'Pamela.'" But if I may judge from his numerous letters to ladies, who were continually making suggestions as one volume after another of 'Clarissa' was published, I should hold that he worked upon a fixed principle of art, and had a regular plan for the conduct of his narrative. Stinstra either mistook him, or Richardson was deceiving himself, when his Dutch correspondent says, "I am extremely astonished, Sir, by your telling me that you never write by a plan; and when you ended one letter, hardly knew what would be your next. What a happy genius, that can thus prosecute his way through so many mazes and labyrinths which perplex your common readers, and never deviate, without ever consulting a map!" He is sometimes apologetical to his critical ladies, and charmingly complimentary; but beneath his honeyed words there is always a refusal to alter a single feature of his characters, or to deviate a hair's breadth from his purpose in the catastrophe. 'Clarissa' is essentially what we now call "a sensation novel." There would be no hesitation in ascribing this character to it, if what Shenstone says of its author were not perfectly true—"he wants the art of abridgment in everything he has yet wrote." Let me glance at its plot to justify this assertion. Clarissa is pressed by her parents to marry a man she dislikes. She is placed under the most severe restraint. She has had a lover, graceful, accomplished, witty, every way fascinating; but he is a libertine, and she knows it. Clarissa throws herself for protection upon Love-

lace, when she elopes from her father's house. By this rash act, into which she was betrayed by fear and not passion, the unprincipled man has her, to some extent, in his power; but her cleverness came to the aid of her purity, and for awhile she baffles all his attempts at her destruction. Lady Bradshaigh, writing to Richardson under the name of Belfour, in 1748, expresses her dread of a fatal catastrophe: "After you have brought the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destruction, let me entreat (may I say insist upon) a turn that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy. . . . If I was to die for it, I cannot help being fond of Lovelace. A sad dog! why would you make him so wicked and yet so agreeable? . . . If you disappoint me, may the hatred of all the young, beautiful, and virtuous, for ever be your portion! . . . Now make Lovelace and Clarissa unhappy, if you dare." The inexorable man will disappoint her. He will not have a happy ending. He will not abate a jot of his great moral, that a man in whom the seeds of wickedness are thickly sown cannot properly be made happy, because he cannot be reformed. "Religion never was at so low an ebb as at present; and if my work must be supposed of the novel kind, I was willing to try if a religious novel would do good." There is nothing in the modern sensational novel that can compare with the boldness of the catastrophe of Clarissa. Lovelace, if the moral had been carried out, would have found a halter provided by the law for his atrocity towards his victim, who dies by her own hand, whilst her destroyer instead shares the common fate of many a fine gentleman of his time—that of falling

in a duel. At this distance of time some of the praises heaped upon Richardson for 'Clarissa' seem altogether extravagant. Martin Sherlock believes that the greatest effort of genius that perhaps was ever made was forming the plan of 'Clarissa Harlowe.' Rousseau, in a letter to D'Alembert, holds that nothing was ever written equal to or approaching it in any language. Diderot is somewhat more moderate in his commendations, but quite strong enough to represent the enthusiasm of Frenchmen for the divine Richardson. Mrs. Barbauld says she "well remembers a Frenchman who paid a visit to Hampstead for the sole purpose of finding out the house in the Flask-walk where Clarissa lodged, and was surprised at the ignorance or indifference of the inhabitants on that subject. The Flask-walk was to him as much classic ground as the rocks of Meillerie to the admirers of Rousseau." Dr. Edward Young, who looks upon Richardson as an instrument of Providence, gives perhaps the most extraordinary proof of his enthusiasm that was ever manifested from author to bookseller: "Suppose in the title-page of the 'Night Thoughts' you should say, 'Published by the Author of Clarissa?'"

The vast accession of fame which Richardson acquired by 'Clarissa Harlowe,' brought upon him, nothing loath, more and more coddling from the bevy of correspondents that he calls his "ladies." We fear they rather irritated him when they told of the great popularity of 'Tom Jones.' Richardson and Fielding appear to have been then running side by side. Lady Bradshaigh says: "As to 'Tom Jones,' I am fatigued

with the name, having lately fallen into the company of several young ladies, who had each a Tom Jones in some part of the world, for so they call their favourites; and ladies, you know, are for ever talking of their favourites. Last post I received a letter from a lady who laments the loss of her Tom Jones; and from another, who was happy in the company of her Tom Jones. In like manner, the gentlemen have their Sophias. A few days ago, in a circle of gentlemen and ladies, who had their Tom Jones's and their Sophias, a friend of mine told me he must show me his Sophia, the sweetest creature in the world, and immediately produced a Dutch mastiff puppy." *

Richardson's most elaborate work, 'Sir Charles Grandison,' appears to have been in preparation in 1752. Mrs. Donnellan asks what he can mean by seeming uncertain whether he should publish his new work. His reply is modest: "Have I not, Madam, already obtruded upon the world many volumes; and have I not reason to apprehend that the world will be tired of me if I do? Where will this scribbler stop, will it not be asked? But when no more can be written or published by the same hand, then indulgence will possibly for that very reason be exerted in favour of the new piece. And a defunct author will probably meet with better quarter than a living one; especially as he is known to be a man in business, an obscure man, and one who is guilty of a very great presumption in daring to write at all, or do anything but print the works of others." † At this

* 'Correspondence of Richardson,' vol. iv. p. 280.

† Ibid, vol. iv. p. 59.

time Fielding had preceded Richardson in the race for popularity by the publication of his 'Amelia.' The bepraised author of 'Clarissa' might have been more heroic and generous than to have written as he then did about Fielding; but he had lived in a vicious atmosphere—his ladies had spoilt him. He writes to Mrs. Donnellan: "You guess that I have not read 'Amelia.' Indeed I have read but the first volume. I had intended to go through with it; but I found the characters and situations so wretchedly low and dirty, that I imagined I could not be interested for any one of them; and to read and not to care what became of the hero and heroine, is a task that I thought I would leave to those who had more leisure than I am blessed with." * Not even his own great success can make him forget the good-natured ridicule of the virtuous Pamela. He writes to Mr. Edwards: "Mr. Fielding has met with the disapprobation you foresaw he would meet with, of his 'Amelia.' He is, in every paper he publishes under the title of the 'Common Garden,' contributing to his own overthrow. He has been overmatched in his own way by people whom he had despised, and whom he thought he had vogue enough, from the success his spurious brat 'Tom Jones' so unaccountably met with, to write down; but who have turned his own artillery against him and beat him out of the field, and made him even poorly in his Court of Criticism give up his 'Amelia,' and promise to write no more on the like subjects." †

* 'Correspondence of Richardson,' vol. iv. p. 60.

† Ibid, vol. iii. p. 33.

The blindness of Richardson to the merits of Fielding can scarcely be attributed to the common jealousy of authors. They had many antipathies in common, and even more "imperfect sympathies." Richardson had no sense of humour. He prefers the 'Rambler' to the 'Spectator.' Of Sterne he can only see the indelicacies: "Who is this Yorick? you are pleased to ask me. You cannot, I imagine, have looked into his books—execrable I cannot but call them; for I am told that the third and fourth volumes are worse, if possible, than the two first—which only I have had the patience to run through. One extenuating circumstance attends his works, that they are too gross to be inflaming." * And yet, with the most perfect bonhommie, he drew a portrait of himself, which, if it had been produced by any other artist, would have been deemed the perfection of caricature. It really says much for the simplicity of his mind, with all its sentimentalities, that he could tell, without the slightest apprehension of laying himself open to ridicule and probably to some suspicion of his immaculate purity, of a ruddy plump gentleman of about sixty-five walking through the Park, with his "eye always on the ladies," and "looking back if he greatly likes or dislikes" the appearance of any one he meets: "I go through the Park once or twice a week to my little retirement; but I will for a week together be in it every day three or four hours, at your command, till you tell me you have seen a person who answers to this description,

* 'Correspondence,' vol. v. p. 146.

namely, Short; rather plump than emaciated, notwithstanding his complaints; about five foot five inches; fair wig; lightish cloth coat, all black besides; one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support when attacked by sudden tremors or startlings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God, not so often as formerly; looking directly foreright, as passers-by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either side of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back: of a light-brown complexion; teeth not yet failing him; smoothish faced, and ruddy cheeked: at some times looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger; a regular even pace, stealing away ground, rather than seeming to rid it: a gray eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head: by chance lively—very lively it will be, if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours: his eye always on the ladies; if they have very large hoops, he looks down and supercilious, and as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that: as he approaches a lady, his eye is never fixed first upon her face, but upon her feet, and thence he raises it up, pretty quickly for a dull eye; and one would think (if we thought him at all worthy of observation) that from her air and (the last beheld) her face, he sets her down in his mind as so or so, and then passes on to the next object he meets; only then looking back, if he greatly likes or dislikes, as

if he would see if the lady appear to be all of a piece, in the one light or in the other." *

The self-complacency of Richardson's authorship is one of the most remarkable exhibitions of a vanity which seems almost incompatible with high talent. And yet the elder D'Israeli, who gives several examples of this quality of mind, calls him "the Shakspeare of Novelists." Boswell says, "Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced." Mr. D'Israeli states that Mrs. Charlotte Lenox "was a regular visitor at Richardson's, and she could scarcely recollect one visit which was not taxed by our author reading one of his voluminous letters, or two or three, if his auditor was quiet and friendly." He prefixed to 'Pamela,' in the character of its editor, the most extravagant eulogium upon his own works. He made a most elaborate collection of the "sentiments" in 'Clarissa.' To each volume of 'Grandison' he prefixed a complete index, "with as much exactness," writes the author of the 'Curiosities of Literature,' "as if it were a History of England." What mattered it to the happy writer if the friends of his own day sometimes laughed at him; he regarded not their covert smiles. Boswell tells a story, upon the authority of "a literary lady"—Mrs. Lenox—that at a dinner given by Richardson, a gentleman recently returned from Paris mentioned that he had seen

* Correspondence,' vol. iv. p. 290.

'Clarissa' lying on the king's brother's table. Part of the company being engaged in talking, Richardson affected not to attend to what was especially meant for him. But when he thought that a moment of silence was a favourable opportunity for all hearing, he turned to the polite traveller, with—"I think, Sir, you were saying somewhat about ——" "A mere trifle, Sir, not worth repeating." Richardson did not speak ten words more the whole day, says Boswell, and maliciously adds that Doctor Johnson was present, and appeared much to enjoy his mortification.

In 1756 Richardson wrote to Mr. Defreval in Paris, "I am teazed by a dozen ladies of note and of virtue to give them a good man, as they say I have been partial to their sex, and unkind to my own." In spite of his business engagements and his "nervous infirmities," the idea of a Good Man took firm hold of his mind, and he determined to write a novel with that title. Little as he was inclined to relish any bantering, he might have been told that this title would have been obnoxious to the contumely of a bad joke—that to the question of Horace—"Vir bonus est *quis?*"—the wicked world would answer, "Vir bonus est *quiz?*" 'Sir Charles Grandison' became the loftier name of a novel which was destined to be the especial favourite of the ladies. Female critics are at his side as he proceeds in his work,—not in the unromantic printing-house in Salisbury-square, but in his Grotto at North End, Hammersmith. Day by day he reads his Manuscript to the charming visitors who are always at his house. They weep; they admire aloud; they write verses

in praise of Harriet Byron; they are astonished at the wonderful hero, and have no conception that he is

"A faultless monster that the world ne'er saw."

Sir Charles Grandison, Baronet, is a prig. But with what surpassing art is the story developed! The author in his Preface says, as an excuse for the bulk of his 'Collection of Familiar Letters,' written, as it were, to the moment, that "mere facts and characters might be comprised in a much smaller compass; but would they be equally interesting? . . . . There is not one episode in the whole, nor, after Sir Charles Grandison is introduced, one letter inserted but what tends to illustrate the main design." I have said, in another place, "We remember to have heard an eminent lawyer declare that he studied Richardson's plots as he would study a mass of evidence in a complicated case, and that the extreme art by which the chain was kept entire, in links not always apparent, could be readily traced by one who brought the legal mind to discover something beyond meaningless prolixity in the endless details of these novels." I apprehend there are few who would attempt this labour in our busier times. My friend was young—perhaps without his "First Brief"—when he applied to such a task, persuading himself, in dwelling upon the charms of Harriet, or the miseries of Clementina, that he was carrying on his legal education. But he remains constant to his early love, and writes, in answer to my question if he solaces himself with Richardson now—"I can even read his works again with pleasure, which I attribute mainly to the won-

derful reality of his figures. Each letter-writer shows himself or herself, and the other *dramatis personæ*, in a new aspect; and all the aspects taken together make a consistent whole." I fear there will never be a revival, in these degenerate days of three-volume novels in large type, of the devotion which rarely wearied of a story told in some three or four hundred epistles. I lately asked at a country circulating library for 'Clarissa' or 'Sir Charles Grandison,' and the worthy caterer of literary novelties told me he had never heard of these books.

I scarcely know how to leave Richardson the novelist, to turn to the shadow of Richardson the bookseller. He led the advanced guard—after their first captain, Defoe—of that illustrious company, who for a century and a half have been carrying into English homes new and ever-varied sources of enjoyment, aye, and of instruction. Out upon the pompous coxcomb, Sir John Hawkins, who says, "of a class of authors" who "vended their compositions when completed to those booksellers who would give most for them," that "the first publication of the kind was the 'Pamela' of Mr. Richardson, which, being read with great eagerness by the young people of the time, and recommended from the pulpit, begat such a craving for more of the same stuff, as tempted some men, whose necessities and abilities were nearly commensurate, to try their success in this new kind of writing." He would depreciate Richardson by saying "he was a man of no learning nor reading." He would depreciate Fielding by describing him as "the inventor of that slang phrase, goodness of heart,

which is every day used as a substitute for probity, and means little more than the virtues of a horse or a dog: in short, he has done more towards corrupting the rising generation than any writer we know of." Good Samuel Richardson—for you really were a good man, in a higher sense to my mind than your own 'Sir Charles Grandison'—forgive me if I cannot forbear a smile now and then at your little vanities, so inseparable from the adulation of your "ladies" of every degree, from the precise Mrs. Chapone to the erring Mrs. Pilkington; from men of various morals, from Dr. Young to Colley Cibber. You are, perhaps, amongst the most famous of those who have been writers as well as publishers; but you command my admiration from the fact that you never neglected the duties of your station, to surrender yourself to the temptations that beset the man who depends upon authorship alone for holding a firm standing in social life. There is sterling honesty in the words which you wrote in the height of your reputation, but when you still had that work to do, which the dignified Mr. Harris regards as "the sordid views of trade." Brave printer of Salisbury-square, you were not ashamed to write in your sixtieth year, to your friend, Mr. Defreval, "You know how my business engages me. You know by what snatches of time I write, that I may not neglect that, and that I may preserve that independency which is the comfort of my life. I never sought out of myself for patrons. My own industry and God's providence have been my whole reliance. The great are not great to me unless they are good. And it is a glorious privilege

that a middling man enjoys who has preserved his independency, and can occasionally (though not stoically) tell the world what he thinks of that world, in hopes to contribute, though by his mite, to mend it."*

I cannot forbear to linger a little while with the author of 'Grandison,' in his double capacity of writer and printer. He has been busy all the year with his sixth volume. He has been approaching the *dénouement*, as he looks in the summer out of his study-window at Hammersmith upon three or four laughing girls who are gathering strawberries in his garden. But now, the bright days of October are passing away, and he must go early to Salisbury-square, happy if he can find a leisure half-hour or two for making Sir Charles and Harriet blessed, to the satisfaction of those amiable ladies who rejoice in happy endings. It is the first of November. He burns a candle in his private room, for the little square is gloomy with the morning fog. Mr. Toovey, his overseer, is out—which is fortunate; for Mr. Richardson's orders are that no inferior person in his establishment shall approach him. His nerves are not strong enough to discuss business matters with his workmen. He takes his manuscript from his capacious pocket, and spreads it upon his desk. He has conveyed a brilliant company to church in eight coaches. He has got the bride and bridegroom to the altar. Sir Charles, with his usual grace, has put the ring on the finger of the most charming woman in England. The congrega-

* 'Correspondence,' vol. v. p. 273.

tion have joined in the responses, to show their interest in the celebration. But the author, who knows how welcome are the minutest details of a wedding, cannot get them out of the church without a few more sentences, which have been haunting him in his waking hours. He takes his office pen and writes (in continuation of a most florid epistle by Miss Selby), "Sir Charles, with a joy that lighted up a more charming flush than usual upon his face, his lively soul looking out of his fine eyes, yet with an air as modest as respectful, did credit to our sex before the applauding multitude, by bending his knee to his sweet bride and saluting her"——There is a horrible outcry in a somewhat distant room of the printing-office. Mr. Richardson exclaims, "Oh! my nerves, my nerves!"—and rings his bell. The attendant errand-boy enters. "What is that dreadful din about? Go and see." Mr. Richardson in vain attempts to proceed with a little speech of Grandison to his Harriet, now no more Byron. The inspiration is gone. "Please, sir," says the errand-boy, "they were a-cobbing Wall-eyed Tom." * "A horrid custom!" Mr. Toovey has now returned, and bows low to his employer as he enters the sacred room. "Mr. Toovey, have I not said that there shall be no more cobbing in my office?" "It can't be put down, sir, provided there has been a regular Chapel to judge the delinquent." "And what offence, Mr. Toovey, had this howling victim committed?" "He was sent

* See Webster's Dictionary for an explanation of "cobbing"—a punishment not peculiar to printers, but once in favour amongst them.

to the Barley Mow for a gallon of porter, and was seen drinking out of the can, and then filling it up from the pump in Bride Lane." "Still, I say, chapel or no chapel, there shall be no cobbing here." "Well, sir, as you please; but it is an ancient institution, as time-honoured as the flogging-block at Westminster." "But, Mr. Toovey, have I not also said that no beer shall be brought into this office before noon." "As you please, sir. But the pressmen had been working all night upon 'Moore's Almanack,' and wanted a little refreshment." "And why all night?" "The Treasurer would have it so. He wants ten thousand perfect, a week before publishing day. He wants to send them off by waggon, for the fast coaches, which go to York in three days, are too expensive." "I thought," murmurs Mr. Richardson, "that evil would come of the wicked spread of sham prognostications." "*Sham*," cries Mr. Toovey; "the pot calls the kettle—" "Don't be vulgar, sir. You have been reading Dr. Swift, the grossest of writers; worse than Fielding; a libellous fellow, though he did wear a cassock, who tried to bring the genuine almanacks into disrepute, when he told that dreadful falsehood about the death of honest old Partridge. An enemy, sir, to King George and the Company, and I have no patience with him.—Wit, indeed!"

I write of "Old Booksellers," and I must say a few more words about one of the most industrious and prosperous of the race; one singularly upright in his dealings; above all tricks and evasions. The poor boy from Derbyshire, who, after his apprentice-

ship, toiled for seven more years as a journeyman, is, in 1754, Master of the Stationers' Company. As the shy lad did not like play, the nervous man shrinks from turtle. His correspondent, Mr. Edwards, author of 'Canons of Criticism,' writes:—"The Company cannot have a better Master, excepting for one part of the duty, and that is the feasting part: and I cannot but figure to myself the miserable example you will set at the head of their loaded tables, unless you have two stout jaw-workers for your wardens, and a good hungry Court of Assistants."*

Although Richardson, as a printer and bookseller, was at this period carrying on his business on a large scale to justify his promotion to this distinction amongst his brethren, I catch glimpses of the internal economy of the printing-office in Salisbury Square, to show me how really trifling were his operations compared with the grand arrangements of our modern era, when a daily newspaper contains almost as many types as a volume of 'Sir Charles Grandison;' when a Parliamentary Report of one thousand pages can be set up and printed off in a week; and when a fashionable publisher thinks it slow work if a new edition of his last sensation novel cannot be produced in a day. The Rev. Philip Skelton, an Irish clergyman, of eccentric manners but of great benevolence, was one of Richardson's employers. On the 17th of March, the candid printer writes to him, "By the beginning of May you expect

* 'Correspondence,' vol. iii. p. 97.

copies of perfect books. Upwards of sixty close sheets to be done in so few weeks. Dear sir, what an expectation!" The impatient author replies, "I care not how my work looks; expedition and correctness are all I desire." His complaints of delay fret the busy printer. "What did I not do to serve you to the utmost of my power? I parted with three pieces of work; I put out to several printers the new edition of my 'Grandison;' took in help to the first edition of the seventh volume; I refused Dr. Leland's last piece. But yet with all this, let me tell you, my dear friend, that two such large volumes as yours could not possibly be finished so soon as you expected, from the time they came into my hands, *by any one printer.*" *

At this period Richardson was moved to come before the public with a statement of his own grievances. On September 14, 1753, he issued, 'The Case of Samuel Richardson, of London, Printer, on the invasion of his Property in the 'History of Sir Charles Grandison,' before publication, by certain Booksellers in Dublin." It appears from Richardson's statement that he had intended to send the volumes of his last novel, as he did those of 'Clarissa Harlowe,' to be printed in Ireland, before he published them himself in London. But he was anticipated. The sheets were stolen from his warehouse, and three Irish booksellers each published cheap editions of nearly half the book before a volume

* 'Correspondence,' vol. v. p. 238.

appeared in England. He had heard an Irish bookseller boast some years before, that he could procure, from any printing-office in London, sheets of any books printed in it, and while it was going on. Richardson concludes his circumstantial narrative with this remark: "At present the English writers may be said, from the attempts and practices of the Irish booksellers and printers, to live in an age of *liberty*, but not of *property*." This occurrence excited naturally the indignant denunciation of the English press. The 'Gray's Inn Journal,' in relating the case of Mr. Richardson, observed that "a greater degree of probity might be expected from booksellers on account of their occupation in life, and connections with the learned. What, then, should be said of Messrs. Exshaw, Wilson, and Saunders, booksellers in Dublin, and perpetrators of this vile act of piracy? They should all be expelled from the Republic of Letters as literary Goths and Vandals, who are ready to invade the property of every man of genius. Had the Sosii, who were booksellers in Rome, been guilty of such sordid dealings, I am persuaded they would have been mentioned with infamy by Horace; and it is recent in everybody's memory that Curll underwent many severe corrections for conduct of the same nature."

Samuel Richardson died in 1761, at the age of seventy-two. He was twice married. His second wife survived him about a year. His will presents a singular example of the ruling passion. He left to numerous friends, male and female, the customary

tribute of a mourning ring. He adds to these bequests, "Had I given rings to all the ladies who have honoured me with their correspondence, and whom I sincerely venerate for their amiable qualities, it would, even in this last solemn act, appear like ostentation." He was of a far higher cast of character than the diverting coxcomb Master Robert Laneham, Gentleman Usher to Queen Elizabeth, but he might say with him, "Always among the Gentlewomen by my good will; Oh, you know, that comes always of a gentle spirit."

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM HUTTON.

SOUTHEY, in his 'Commonplace Book,' writing of manners and literature in the time of Queen Anne, says, "Booksellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare." I have already pointed out some indications of this fact, illustrated in the Life of Thomas Gent. Southey's statement is made upon the authority of Boswell, in reference to the dealings of the father of Samuel Johnson. The passages referred to are as follows: "His father was Michael Johnson, a native of Derbyshire, of obscure extraction, who settled in Lichfield as a bookseller and stationer. . . . . Michael was forced by the narrowness of his circumstances to be very diligent in business, not only in his shop but by continually resorting to several towns in the neighbourhood, many of which were a considerable distance from Lichfield." As an instance of the rarity of the shops of country booksellers, Boswell goes on to say, "There was not one even in Birmingham, in which poor old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market day." There is a touching passage in a letter written in his 76th year by the son of the old bookseller, which shows how habitual was this practice in his father's time, and

how it seemed in another generation to be thought degrading: "To Mr. Henry White, a young clergyman, with whom he now formed an intimacy, so as to talk to him with great freedom, he mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. 'Once, indeed,' said he, 'I was disobedient; I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault. I went to Uttoxeter in very bad weather, and stood for a considerable time bareheaded in the rain, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory.'"

Samuel Johnson made his first acquaintance with publishers in that town of Birmingham where his father had kept a book-stall. Boswell records that, at the age of twenty-four, the poor student, who had just lost his father, went to pass some time with Mr. Hector, a surgeon, who lodged and boarded at the house of a bookseller: "Mr. Warren was the first established bookseller in Birmingham, and was very attentive to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much service to him in his trade by his knowledge of literature; and he even obtained the assistance of his pen in furnishing some numbers of a periodical essay, printed in the newspaper of which Warren was proprietor."

Before I follow Samuel Johnson into the great bookselling world of London, let me glance at one or two of the country booksellers who are not wholly

forgotten, though their sphere was confined, like that of old Michael Johnson.

In 1730 a poor boy, seven years of age, was put to work in the one silk mill at Derby. I see the shadow of this little fellow, so diminutive that a pair of pattens is tied upon his feet that he may be able to work at the engine. The brutal superintendent canes him mercilessly. The hours of labour require him to rise at five every morning, summer and winter. He is half-starved by his harsh father, a drunken woolcomber. He has no time for the improvement of his mind, and had very early conceived a distaste for learning; for two years before the tyranny of the mill his schoolmaster would beat his head against the wall, holding it by the hair, so that he hated all books except those of pictures. In 1801, dedicating his 'History of the Roman Wall' to Mr. John Nichols, he says, "You will pardon the errors of the work, for you know I was not bred to letters, but that the Battledore, at an age not exceeding six, was the last book I used at school." The Battledore was the successor of the more primitive Horn-book. For two years the undersized boy escaped the common accidents of badly-fenced machinery; but he then nearly lost his hand, which was caught in the cogs of an engine, and, to balance the providential saving of life and limb, his father broke his walking-stick over his bony back. In another year his mother died. His father gave up housekeeping, spent the money which his goods sold for, and went into lodgings, leaving the unhappy boy to the care of strangers, by whom he was half-starved.

I have often looked upon the famous silk-mill of Sir Thomas Lombe, standing upon a swampy island of the river Derwent; but it was ever associated in my mind with the early miseries of William Hutton—miseries which were the common lot of all factory children, until, a hundred years after, the Legislature thought it might be as well, amidst their solicitude for the slaves of the West Indies, to pay a little attention to the slavery of factory children, overworked, untaught, given up, as Hutton describes his own lot, to be "the constant companions of the most rude and vulgar of the human race—never taught by nature, and never wishing to be taught." During the progress of a century there had been sufficient improvement, even before the Factory Act, to prevent such occurrences as one which this boy describes as the experience of the fifth year of his apprenticeship: "I was now turned twelve. Life began to open. My situation at the mill was very unfavourable. Richard Porter, my master, had made a wound in my back with his cane. It grew worse. In a succeeding punishment the point of his cane struck the wound, which brought it into such a state that a mortification was apprehended. My father was advised to bathe me in Keddleston water. A cure was effected, and I yet carry the scar." He now obtained a little instruction from an old woman who had been a schoolmistress; but there was no relaxation from his labour in the mill except on one occasion, when an unusually dry summer had so lowered the water in the Derwent, that the one wheel, which set in motion the machinery for making the organzine silk, could not work. The

silk-throwing mills of Derby, after the days of Watt, were equally independent of the heats of summer or the frosts of winter.

The seven years servitude in the mill at Derby was followed by a harder service. William was apprenticed to his uncle, a stocking-maker at Nottingham. He was again half-starved, not from the necessities of the family, but from their parsimoniousness. He had no clothes to wear, for he was required to earn a certain sum weekly for his task-master. It was four years before he could save enough money by overwork to buy a decent suit of clothes. At length, after a severe beating, he ran away. What were the troubles he had to encounter during this rash venture into the outer world it is unnecessary to recount. But his description of his feelings upon entering Birmingham, as contrasted with his future prosperity in that town, is deeply interesting: "I sat down to rest upon the north side of the Old Cross, near Philip Street, the poorest of all the poor belonging to that great parish, of which, twenty-seven years after, I should be overseer. I sat under that roof, a silent oppressed object, where, thirty-one years after, I should sit to determine differences between man and man." It did not occur to his thoughts, he says, that nine years after he first entered Birmingham he should become a resident there, and thirty-nine years after should write its history. At this crisis of the young stockinger's life he could obtain no employment; and was reluctantly compelled to return to his uncle's roof, where he continued till his term of apprenticeship was at an end in 1744. He remained for two

years more to work with his uncle as a journeyman; but during this period a love of reading, and a taste for music, had been developed in him. He bought old books, and having some mechanical ingenuity, he resolved to bind his tattered collection. Henceforward we see the shadow of William Hutton as bookbinder, bookseller, and stationer. His story, so well told by himself, opens many interesting aspects of a youth, under every disadvantage of poverty and ignorance, building up a lucrative trade, at a period when country booksellers were few; by patient industry reaching a comparatively high position in social life; and, having obtained a competence, devoting his latter years to literary labours—requiring, indeed, no great amount of genius, but, with his good sense, inquiring spirit, and perseverance, calculated to give him an honourable reputation in his own day, and not to be without their value to the students of other generations.

Hutton began his bookbinding operations by cobbling up three volumes of 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' which constituted his first purchase. He could only "raise books of small value," he informs us, and these in worn-out bindings. He bought the refuse stock of a poor bookseller in Nottingham, who was also a binder, and watched him at his work. He soon learnt to bind in a workmanlike manner: "The first book I bound was a very small one, Shakspere's 'Venus and Adonis.' I showed it to the bookseller. He seemed surprised. I could see jealousy in his eye." 'Venus and Adonis!' Ah! William Hutton, if you had known the value of those twenty-seven

leaves! All the separate editions of 'Venus and Adonis' are of great rarity. Hutton, whose tastes made him a book-reader instead of a collector of rare books, has no raptures about such an acquisition. The refuse of the poor bookseller was probably rich in some of those *chap-books*, then so common, but which are now amongst the choicest treasures of the bibliomaniac. When, a year or two later, he opened a shop at Southwell on market days, he furnished it with about two hundred weight of what he calls "trash." One would like to have a Catalogue of that "trash." His small experience would little qualify him to penetrate the mysteries of book-dealing. Even a contemporary of Hutton, Mr. Flockton, of Canterbury, a man of some bibliographical knowledge, was termed in the palmy days of the great collectors "the ignorant bookseller," because he had sold for two shillings the play of 'Dido, Queen of Carthage,' for a copy of which Malone paid sixteen guineas. Hutton, I fear, in his early time would have known as little about black-letter rarities as the sailor, who, when he saw John Ratcliffe, a famous collector of the last century, rushing frantically about as his goods were carried out into the street whilst a neighbouring house was on fire, and heard the portly gentleman exclaim, "O my precious Caxtons!" produced two full-curled periwigs, with "Lord bless you, Sir, here they are, quite safe!"

In 1746 the uncle of William Hutton died, leaving him the inheritance of a stocking-frame. The young man could make stockings, but he could not sell them. Despairing of pursuing the trade to which

he had been apprenticed, with any chance of obtaining bread, he resolved upon adopting bookbinding as the means of living. But he had no proper tools, especially those which were required for lettering and gilding. He must go to London to buy them. A sister, who had upheld him in his struggles, raised three guineas for his use; sewed them in the collar of his shirt; and put eleven shillings in his pocket for his travelling expenses. He was three days walking on the road, and at length rested his blistered feet at a carrier's inn in Smithfield. Here he indulged in the luxury of a supper, the only meal he took under a roof during his visit to London. "If a man," he says, "has any money, he will see stalls enough in London which will supply him with something to eat." Thus he breakfasted upon furmity at a wheelbarrow, and sometimes had a halfpennyworth of soup and another of bread. He bought his gilding tools, his leather, his boards, and his three alphabets of letters, and thus transacted all his business. But the inquiring spirit which prompted him in his old age to walk the whole length of the Roman wall, and to note every peculiarity of Bosworth Field with the true historical mind, led him to visit all the curiosities of London that he could see for nothing. One penny to see Bedlam was all he spent. The Houses of Parliament were sitting. "As I had always applied deification to great men, I was surprised to see a hawker cram her twopenny pamphlet into a member's face, and that he, instead of caning her, took not the least notice." This twopenny pamphlet appears to have been the only article connected with his future pursuits which attracted his notice. He stayed

three days in London, but he has not a word to say about booksellers or their shops; which might probably have been more accessible to him than the Tower, where the wardens prevented his entrance, conjecturing that he had no money to pay for sight-seeing. And so our northern adventurer trudged home from the south with four shillings in his pocket out of the eleven which he had brought to the capital, and took back fourpence to Nottingham, having been absent nine days.

William Hutton had now to look out for a fitting place in which to exercise his new vocation. Ever cautious, he would not make too great a venture at the first starting. He took a shop at Southwell, fourteen miles from Nottingham, paying for its use twenty shillings a year. Here he deposited his stock of tattered volumes, and "in one day became the most eminent bookseller in Southwell." He was not, however, a resident in this little town, now better known than it was a century ago by being the scene of the first sensible experiment in the administration of the Poor Laws. The resolute and prudent man thus describes his course of life during a rainy winter: "I set out from Nottingham at five every Saturday morning, carried a burthen of from three to thirty pounds weight to Southwell, opened shop at ten, starved in it all day upon bread, cheese, and half a pint of ale; took from 1*s.* to 6*s.*, shut up at four, and by trudging through the solitary night and the deep roads five hours more, I arrived at Nottingham by nine, where I always found a mess of milk porridge by the fire, prepared by my valuable sister." But as might be expected, the labour of

such a life was great and the profit small. In 1750, therefore, he made a journey to Birmingham, where he found that three booksellers were thriving. One of these, Mr. Warren, I have mentioned as having been associated with the early literary efforts of Samuel Johnson. He was one of three mentioned by Hutton as the "great men" of that active, prosperous, and intelligent community. He thought, however, that there might be room for a fourth in a small way. His way was, indeed, a small one. He agreed to pay a shilling a week for the rent of half a very little shop. His stock was not an expensive one. Upon the invitation of a dissenting minister, with whom his sister had once lived as a servant, he walked to Gainsborough, and there purchased of his sister's old master a lot of books at his own price. He estimates their weight at two hundred pounds, and he pays for them by the following note: "I promise to pay to Ambrose Rudsall one pound seven shillings when I am able."

It is difficult to imagine a more forlorn condition of life than that of William Hutton as he sat amongst his old books, looking in vain for customers. There was not a face that he knew in this populous town. He was separated from his sister. He saw little hope of making his way in the world without money and without friends. But gradually two or three young men came to know the intelligent bookseller, and to talk with him upon subjects something higher than those belonging to an ordinary retail trade. A popular demand for literature was growing up. The dealer in second-hand books had odd volumes of poets and essayists to tempt the youth who had a

sixpence or a shilling to lay out; and if Hutton could purchase any books of greater value, he could smarten them up by his skill in binding. By the most rigid economy he found himself at the end of the first year twenty pounds better than when he began business. He felt that he was at the beginning of a prosperous career. But suddenly there arose a dark cloud which threatened to shut out all the sunshine of his hopes. There were official tyrants a hundred and fifteen years ago, who have continued to exist up to this very time, although their power of injury has been gradually diminishing. He has described this crisis, in which the fortunes of one of the greatest benefactors of Birmingham were very nearly wrecked: "The overseers, fearful I should become chargeable to the parish, examined me with regard to my settlement, and, with a voice of authority, ordered me to procure a certificate, or they would remove me from the town. Terrified, I wrote to my father, who returned for answer, 'that All Saints, in Derby, never granted certificates.' I was hunted by ill-nature two years. I repeatedly offered to pay the levies (rates), which was refused. A succeeding overseer, a draper, of whom I had purchased two suits of clothes, value 10*l.*, consented to take them. The scruple exhibited a short sight, a narrow principle, and the exultation of power over the defenceless." The adroit purchase of two suits of clothes from the draper in office was an unquestionable assurance of William Hutton's "respectability." The next year he took a better shop and a dwelling-house. He had now a prosperous trade, and read the signs of the times aright when he set up the

first Circulating Library established in Birmingham. This new mode of diffusing knowledge appears to have travelled very quickly from London to the country, for the first circulating library in the metropolis was established in the Strand in 1740, by a bookseller of the name of Bathoe.* Let me deviate a little from tracing Hutton's career, to call attention to that of a bookseller who presided over a circulating library of a very different character to that which became an attraction to the ladies of Birmingham. "As I hired out books," says Hutton, "the fair sex did not neglect the shop. Some of them were so obliging as to show an inclination to share with me the troubles of the world." John Nicholson, of Cambridge, had for five-and-forty years another order of customers.

In the staircase of the public library at Cambridge hangs a portrait painted by Reinagle, and underneath it an engraving with the inscription, "John Nicholson, Mappesiana Bibliotheca Cantab." Some visitor might ask how it is that a man who is handed down to posterity with attributes so essentially different from illustrious Dons, gracing many a college wall, but whom posterity has agreed to forget—how it is that an elderly man of a shrewd countenance, in a wig and cocked hat, with buckles in his shoes and a heavy load of books in his hands, should be honoured with a place even in the approach to the University library. Still more would the visitor be surprised if a smaller print of the same old bookseller were also here exhibited, in which he is repre-

* Cunningham's 'Handbook of London.'

sented bearing a similar burden in one hand, but knocking at a college door with the other. Here the inscription is, "MAPS! Anything wanted to-day, Sir? *Fungar vice Bibliothecæ, quæ alios scientes reddere valebit, ipsa exors sciendi.*" This smaller print was published in 1796, the year in which Nicholson died. The common name by which this benefactor to learning was known in the University was "Maps or Pictures." He would carry about these articles from college to college; and it certainly was well that the walls of the students' chambers should be covered with something more significant of classical or sacred studies than the coloured representation of the last winner of the Derby, of the attitudes of the first figurante of the ballet, or the grim portrait of the Champion of England. But John Nicholson was a benefactor to learning of a higher class than that of a mere vender of maps and pictures. He was a successor of Robert Watts, who first established a circulating library in Cambridge in 1745. His library comprised a large stock of maps and prints, from which circumstance he first obtained the name of "Maps," which Nicholson inherited. During the forty-five years in which he pursued his business at Cambridge, there were probably as many poor students as rich ones, and to those of small means, the circulating library of Nicholson was an immense advantage. It included most of the lecture books used in the University. Within the last few years the opening of scholarships, and the establishment of new ones to be competed for, have attracted many to the Universities who could not have gone thither without such help. But the size and price of text-books, and of all other

books, are now essentially different from those of the time when the sale of the best standard works was very limited at Cambridge, and they were hired by all classes of students. At the present time the cost of books absolutely necessary for the student may be counted by shillings. Elementary education now embraces subjects much higher than those treated in the old class of school-books, and the sale of works for the school and college student is greatly extended, bringing with this extension a proportionate cheapness. Thus, such books can now be bought for less than the hire used to cost in the last century. Nicholson's charge to his subscribers was ten shillings a term, for which a man could have ten books. But Nicholson's library was also rich in the best editions of the Classics. Standard works of English literature were there in abundance. To many an under-graduate, who was not allowed to take books away from college libraries, it was an invaluable benefit to have the means of study in his own rooms. We, of the present day, can scarcely estimate to what extent John Nicholson may have been the humble means of adding some distinguished names to the roll of Cambridge scholarship, and of saving the University from the indignant satire of Cowper, applied to the period when our old bookseller flourished:—

> "The schools became a scene
> Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
> His cap well lined with logic not his own,
> With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
> Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.

> Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
> Became stone-blind, precedence went in track,
> And he was competent whose purse was so." *

Hutton's Circulating Library at Birmingham contributed, probably, little to his accumulation of wealth. But he had a friend, in 1753, who was more valuable to him, in the character of a papermaker, than in that of a writer of popular novels. It was a lucky hour which brought William Hutton acquainted with Robert Bage. There are few of the present generation who ever heard of the once famous novels of 'Man as he is,' and 'Man as he is not.' I remember to have read them with great interest, but I have not now the slightest recollection of their characters or their plots. Bage commenced his career of authorship in 1781, with 'Mount Keneth,' a novel. Hutton wrote an account of his friend's life, when he died in 1801. They had known each other sixty years, for Bage was a native of Derbyshire. They had become friends from a time just before their business connexion, when the thriving papermaker proposed to the struggling bookseller that he should devote a portion of his small house to a business of greater returns and more profit than that of second-hand books and a circulating library. Hutton had some ready money, and preferred purchasing paper of the maker to selling it upon commission. He hung out a sign, "The Paper Warehouse." He tells us the result in a few words: "From this small hint I followed the stroke forty years, and acquired an ample fortune."

* 'The Task,' B. II.

The shadow of William Hutton, as the "old bookseller," presents itself to me no longer. He was too fond of money to accumulate scarce books with the ardour of a Collector, like some of his bookselling contemporaries, whose enthusiasm has been recorded by Dr. Dibdin. Thomas Miller, of Bungay, for example, in 1755 "set himself up in the character of grocer and bookseller," and mixed the sweets of learning with the fragrance of sugar and spices. I see in Hutton a prosperous tradesman, happily married. I see an important public functionary, exercising with a vigilance and sagacity that a County Court judge might emulate, the duties of a Commissioner of the Birmingham Court of Requests. I see a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, devoting his old age to investigations that might appear to be only possible to be successfully carried through by the vigour of youth. His numerous writings might seem to be the result of the labour of a lifetime, instead of being the productions of one who first took pen in hand, for the purpose of publication, when he was in his fifty-seventh year. Devoting himself to literary pursuits, he had the misfortune to lose a valuable library in the Church and King riots of 1791, and the greater misery of beholding the health of his beloved wife irretrievably shattered, in the alarm she felt during those brutal riots, when his country-house at Bennett's Hill was set on fire and burnt down. In 1792 he wrote to Mr. Nichols: "The late unhappy affair has thrown me off every bias. I had made a considerable progress in the Antiquities of Verulam, and with great pleasure to myself. But the manuscript was

destroyed, and, till matters are settled, I am not certain whether I dare resume it. I long for that tranquil life which I have lost,—a life of still pursuit, that neither injures nor is injured." But the tranquil life and the tranquil mind soon returned. From early years he had been a dabbler in verse, and continued to write what, by courtesy, were called 'Poems.' Some of his labours were of more permanent value. His 'History of the Roman Wall' presents a remarkable example of his enthusiasm at an advanced age. In his Introduction to this book he says, "Perhaps I am the first man that ever travelled the whole length of this Wall, and probably the last that ever will attempt it. Who then will say, he has, like me, travelled it twice? Old people are much inclined to accuse youth of their follies; but on this head silence will become me, lest I should be asked, 'What can exceed the folly of that man, who, at *seventy-eight*, walked six hundred miles to see a shattered Wall!'" Such zeal and perseverance did not show "the folly of the man." Nor was it folly in him, in his seventy-fifth year, to write his life, which was published by his daughter Catherine, after his death in 1815, at the great age of ninety-two. Of this interesting book I published an abstract in 'The Penny Magazine' of 1836. This brought to me a present of a silk purse netted by herself, with a letter, which shows how the daughter, at fourscore, preserved the active mind and industrious habits of the father. Several years later this venerable lady edited for me a republication of 'The Life of William Hutton, written by himself.'

CHAPTER VIII.

EDWARD CAVE; RALPH GRIFFITHS.

IF Samuel Johnson were the Jupiter of Literature during fifty years of the eighteenth century, the booksellers of that period, with whom he had familiar intercourse, literary and social, were his satellites. Far "less than Jove," they had a light of their own, which may guide me a little onward in my voyage through those occasionally obscure regions. The brightest of them are double the number of the attendant stars of the king of planets. There are half a score more of minor lights in the inky way. But I see the great luminary in constant association with his chief satellites; in their front shops, in their back shops, in their parlours beyond the shop, in their dining-rooms and drawing-rooms, and sometimes receiving homage in his own residence, whether in Gough Square, Staple's Inn, Gray's Inn, Inner Temple, Johnson Court, or Bolt Court. I shall occasionally glance at their shadows as they flit by me in the pages of the most amusing of biographers. Some of the most eminent of the old booksellers, after the days of Pope to those of Cowper, belong to the period which may be justly called the Johnsonian era.

Early in the eighteenth century there was a boy of marked ability in the endowed grammar-school of Rugby, who was the son of a shoemaker in that town. Edward Cave had probably to endure much contumely from his richer companions. A London shopkeeper had founded Rugby school; but nevertheless the presence of the son of one who mended shoes close by the school-gate—one of the "rude mechanicals who work for bread"—was a blot upon the dignity of the foundation. The clever and diligent boy had of course a nickname. In his prosperous latter years he used to travel on horseback, and had relays of horses at his command. Arriving at the house of an old schoolfellow of county distinction, he desired the servant to say that "Ned Cave, the cobbler, was come to visit him." There is a monument in the churchyard of Rugby, the inscription on which, written by Hawkesworth, records that "Edward Cave, without interest, fortune, or connexion, by the native power of his own genius, assisted only by a classical education, which he received in the grammar-school of this town, planned, executed, and established a literary work, called the Gentleman's Magazine." In his life, written by Johnson, it is recorded—not much to the honour of the Rev. Mr. Holyock, "to whose care most of the neighbouring families, even of the highest rank, entrusted their sons,"—that Cave had to bear the burden of the unlucky pranks of boys, "far above him in rank and expectations;" and that he was "oppressed with unreasonable tasks, that there might be an opportunity of quarrelling with his failure."

The despised "Cave, the cobbler," according to Johnson, "bore this persecution for a while, and then left the school, and the hope of a literary education, to seek some other means of gaining a livelihood." If the feeble and tyrannical pedagogues who presided over grammar-schools after the Revolution, and during the Georgian era, "hated not learning worse than toad or asp," and especially hated the almost impossible union of learning and poverty, it is satisfactory to know that whilst Rugby had its Holyock in the reign of Anne, it had its Arnold in the reign of Victoria. A different spirit now prevails in all public schools from that which shut out young Cave from reaching the eminence which his schoolmaster first designed for him. "He was so well pleased with his quick progress in the school, that he declared his resolution to breed him for the University, and recommend him as a servitor to some of his scholars of high rank." This sentence of Cave's biography would seem to imply that a servitor was something akin to the lacquey of an individual master. Johnson, the lexicographer, defines servitor, "one of the lowest order in the University." Perhaps, from either condition, the shoemaker's son had a lucky escape.

Young Cave's endeavours "to seek other means of getting his livelihood" first made him clerk to a collector of excise, and afterwards an apprentice, upon liking, to a timber merchant. He finally found a congenial position with Mr. Collins, a printer in the city of London, who is described by Dunton as "a composition made up of justice and industry, a

sincere friend, and so expeditious in despatch of business, that he printed some sheets for me in ten days that some others did in twenty." Johnson says, rather slily, with reference to printers of his own time, "this was a trade for which men were *formerly* qualified by a literary education, and which was pleasing to Cave, because it furnished some employment for his scholastic attainments." His master having discovered his value, he was sent to Norwich to conduct a weekly paper. Here he obtained some reputation as a writer. Mr. Collins having died before Cave's apprenticeship was expired, he got employment with Mr. Barber, the favourite Tory printer. He was now married; was a contributor to 'Mist's Journal,' and finally obtained a situation in the Post-office. Here he was promoted to the office of Clerk of the Franks. In this capacity he got into disgrace with members of Parliament, by stopping franks which were given by them to their friends, being, as he thought, an illegal extension of their privilege. Having been cited before the House of Commons, and accused, "as I suppose very unjustly," says Johnson, of opening letters, he was dismissed from his situation. Eventually he purchased a small printing-office. Henceforth "St. John's Gate," where this business was conducted, was to be famous. Here, on the 1st of January, 1731, he set up 'The Gentleman's Magazine.' One of the chief objects of this miscellany was to present news in a condensed form. The prospectus says, "Newspapers are of late so multiplied as to render it impossible, unless a man makes it his business,

to consult them all . . . . . so that they are become the chief channels of amusement and instruction. . . . . Two hundred half-sheets per month are thrown upon the press only in London, and as many in the country." There were also "divers written accounts." The trade of writing news-letters had been plied vigorously by Cave when he was a clerk in the Post-office. He came as a practised hand to deal with the journalizing staple of his magazine; but it was his good fortune to raise it into a higher sphere of literature, and to make it a more effectual instrument of diffusing political intelligence than had been ever before attempted. To the courage and perseverance of Edward Cave we chiefly owe "the present publicity of the doings of our rulers, which, instead of shaking, as it was once feared that it would, has, without doubt, increased the stability of our constitution."* It was in 1736 that Cave determined to put in practice his favourite scheme of inserting a regular series of Parliamentary Debates in the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' His mode of proceeding is described by Sir John Hawkins. I see the shadow of the adroit printer, not easily concealing his large body, in some dark corner of the House of Commons; now and then venturing to bring out a note-book; picking up information from members in the lobby; adjourning to a tavern with one or two of his agents, who had been similarly employed; making something like a connected series of their memoranda; and, finally, handing them over to some

* Andrews' 'History of British Journalism,' vol. i. p. 142.

man of letters to dress up. But these reports were not published till the close of each session, and then only with the initials of the speakers. After this fearful abuse of privilege had passed unnoticed for two years, the House awoke to the indignity of being reported by "fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery," and dreaded that the time would come when the speeches of the House would be every day printed, even during the session. It having been resolved that the House would proceed with the utmost severity against all such offenders, Cave evaded the costly penalties of commitment, by publishing 'Debates in the Senate of Great Lilliput.' The letters forming the names of the speakers were transposed or changed in these reports, after the fashion that compositors call *pie*. Thus Walpole became "Walclup," and Bathurst "Brutstalk." Johnson succeeded to the office of rendering these debates famous by his eloquence, knowing little more than the names of the speakers, the subjects of discussion, and the general course of the argument. He was never, he said, in the gallery of the House of Commons but once.

In 1734 Cave offered a prize of fifty pounds for the best poem on 'Life, Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell.' Johnson, in his life of the enterprising publisher of 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' says, "Being but newly acquainted with wealth, and thinking the influence of fifty pounds extremely great, he expected the first authors of the kingdom to appear as competitors, and offered the allotment of the prize to the Universities. But when the time came, no

name was seen among the writers that had been ever seen before. The Universities, and several private men, rejected the province of assigning the prize." The prize-system long subsisted as a temptation to juvenile emulation, and eventually assumed its most ridiculous shape when working-men were to be encouraged to write the best novel, of which the principal judge was to be an ex-Lord-Chancellor. The discreet Peer followed the precedent of the Universities; and left to a friend, who had incautiously consented to be one of the judges, the task (I use his own words) "of wading for days together through hopeless trash." Johnson, in the extremity of his indigence, does not appear to have been tempted into the competition which Cave proposed. He preferred to work upon his 'Irene' and his 'London,' to taking a ticket in Cave's lottery. Perhaps he would rather have done what Wilcox the bookseller recommended, when a gigantic figure, with a huge face scarred by disease, rolled into his shop, avowing his intention to get his living by authorship. "You had better buy a porter's knot." Wilcox, according to Johnson's own account, was nevertheless one of his best friends. But it is at St. John's Gate that we most frequently recognise the poor scholar as seeking for a steady friend. Let me look upon his shadow there; not behind the screen in Cave's dining-room, when he was ashamed to show his ragged clothes, but in Cave's largest composing-room, upon a more unusual occasion than that of swallowing a hasty meal provided by his publisher.

Mr. Cave had often heard Mr. Johnson speak of

the young gentleman who had been his pupil, and had accompanied him to London in the spring of 1737. David Garrick had been entered of Lincoln's Inn, but was little inclined towards the law. He had attempted, in partnership with his brother, to pursue a promising branch of trade, but soon abandoned the undertaking, about which Foote made merry, when he said that he remembered Garrick living in Durham Yard, with three quarts of vinegar in his cellar, calling himself a wine merchant. The young friend of Johnson was scarcely of age, when Cave desired to be a witness of his wonderful histrionic powers, of which Johnson spoke. There had been no public exhibition of his talents, when a private performance was to take place in Cave's house, where the young frequenter of the theatres was sometimes a guest. The room over the great arch of St. John's Gate has been cleared of its composing-frames. Half a dozen copies of Fielding's farce of 'The Mock Doctor' have been put in the hands of Cave's journeymen, to read the parts allotted to them. The room is lighted, the company is seated, the compositors and pressmen and devils are permitted a peep. Enter Gregory with Dorcas, his wife. It is very soon seen that young Davy has at least a genius for comedy, when the faggot-maker describes his regular education, first at the charity-school, and then as the pupil of a physician, under the facetious denomination of a Merry Andrew. Fielding was contented with doing little more than translate Molière's 'Médecin malgré lui,' adapting it to English manners. Thus when Garrick made the farce one of his stock-pieces,

Gregory was as amusing as Sganarelle; and the polite audiences that smiled decorously in the Palais Royal, laughed outrageously in Goodman's Fields. So laughed Johnson, so laughed Cave (although the wise Sir John Hawkins says of him, "he had no great relish for mirth, but he could bear it"), so laughed the compositors, when Gregory, ascertaining that the father of the afflicted lady, whose dumbness "proceeded from her having lost her speech," paraded his learning, with little variation from Molière: "Cabricius arci thuram cathalimus, singulariter nom. Hæc musa hic, hæc, hoc, genitivo hujus, hunc, hanc musæ. Bonus, bona, bonum. Estne oratio Latinus? Etiam. Quia substantivo et adjectivum concordat in generi numerum et casus sic dicunt, aiunt, prædicant, clamitant, et similibus." Garrick's performance in St. John's Gate, the year before he first appeared in a theatre at Ipswich, was doubtless a hit, and Johnson would goodnaturedly rejoice that he had been the means of giving pleasure to the bookseller.

Sir John Hawkins, who rarely condescends to any mode of writing that can be called lively, has, in a note to his 'Life of Johnson,' given a somewhat amusing description of Cave's "good hands" in the magazine. The most eminent of them was Mr. Moses Browne, originally a pencutter, who carried off the fifty pounds prize. "Being a person of a religious turn, he also published in verse a series of devout contemplations, called 'Sunday Thoughts.' Johnson, who often expressed his dislike of religious poetry, and who, for the purpose of religious meditation, seemed to think one day as proper as another,

read them with cold disapprobation, and said, he had a great mind to write and publish 'Monday Thoughts.'" There was Mr. John Duick, also a pen-cutter, who was another poetical contributor to the magazine. There was also Mr. Foster Webb, a young man educated in Mr. Watkins's academy in Spital Square, who was famous as a writer of enigmas. Mr. Watkins was fortunate in having had four other literary pupils whose ambition had probably been kindled by the modern reputation of the ancient St. John's Gate. Sir John Hawkins speaks of all these contributors with a patronising respect for their abilities and acquirements, and then, with reference to Cave, falls into his congenial vein of dull sarcasm. "'He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities; that, meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendour of some of those luminaries in literature who favoured him with their correspondence, he told him that if he would, in the evening, be at a certain ale-house in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of the persons mentioned in the preceding note. Johnson accepted the invitation, and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy uncombed wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified." And why should not the man, dressed in a loose horseman's coat and great bushy uncombed wig, have been introduced to Mr. Moses Browne and the other luminaries at the

ale-house in Clerkenwell? Johnson at that time had obtained no public recognition of his talent and learning. His 'London' was yet unpublished; his 'Irene' was not yet acted; he was not yet "déterré;" he was not yet accustomed to sit at good men's feasts, or to occupy the foremost position at the Literary Club. He took his natural place amongst the hacks of a period when Grub-street was the everlasting theme of contempt from the pens of those who were born great or had achieved greatness. When he left the illustrious society of the ale-house in Clerkenwell, Mr. Cave might expect to hear that his new friend might be a fine scholar, but he evidently was a very poor one, and not altogether of the politest manners.

Cave's project of a magazine received, as it is well known, no encouragement from the booksellers of that period. He had the sagacity to see that a new class of readers had risen up to whom such a miscellany would be a welcome addition to periodical literature. The success was immediate, and it was instantly followed by a host of rivals, the greater number of which quickly perished. Johnson has recorded that "only 'The London Magazine,' supported by a powerful association of booksellers, and circulated with all the art and all the cunning of trade, exempted itself from the general fate of Cave's invaders, and obtained, though not an equal, yet a considerable sale." Cave used to sell ten thousand copies monthly; but his attention to the conduct of it was unremitting. "He scarcely ever looked out of the window," said Johnson, "but with a view to

its improvement." It was flourishing in 1754, when its intelligent projector died. "One of the last acts of reason he exerted was fondly to press the hand that is now writing this little narrative." Such was the public testimony of Johnson, when he had risen into eminence as the essayist and lexicographer, of his affection for the humble printer who had befriended him in his days of poverty and neglect. Writing to Mrs. Carter, two years after, he says, "Poor dear Cave, I owed him much."

The first popular Review succeeded, after an interval of eighteen years, the first popular Magazine. 'The Monthly Review' commenced in 1749. Ralph Griffiths was not so original in his conception of a literary miscellany as Edward Cave, for in 1683 there was a 'Weekly Memento for the Ingenious, or an Account of Books;' and, in the year when the Prince of Orange came to free the press from some of its shackles, there was published 'Weekly Memorials; or, an Account of Books lately set forth; with other Accounts relating to Learning; by Authority.' The 'History of the Works of the Learned,' which first appeared in 1737, was essentially a popular Review. David Hume says, in the account of his own life, "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my 'Treatise of Human Nature.' It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." Upon this statement Mr. Burton remarks, that Hume "was never easily satisfied with the success of his works;

and we know that this one was not so entirely unnoticed by the periodical press, such as it then was, but that it called forth a long review in the number for November, 1739, of 'The History of the Works of the Learned,' a periodical which may be said to have set the example in England of systematic reviews of new books. This review is written with considerable spirit, and has a few pretty powerful strokes of sarcasm."* It would appear, from another quotation which we must take the liberty of making from Mr. Burton's excellent biography of Hume, that criticism, at that period, was a somewhat dangerous pursuit for a bookseller to be concerned in. Mr. Burton thinks that the anecdote which we subjoin is not in itself incredible, but that it requires authentication.

Immediately after Hume's death there appeared in 'The London Review' the following account of the manner in which he had acknowledged the article in 'The Works of the Learned:'—"It does not appear our author had acquired at this period of his life that command over his passions of which he afterwards makes his boast. His disappointment at the public reception of his Essay on 'Human Nature' had, indeed, a violent effect on his passions in a particular instance, it not having dropped so dead-born from the press but that it was severely handled by the reviewers of those times in a publication entitled 'The Works of the Learned.' A circumstance this which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction

* Burton's 'Life of David Hume,' p. 108.

of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept, during the paroxysm of his anger, at his sword's point, trembling behind the counter, lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic by a raving philosopher."*

Whether Mr. Ralph Griffiths ever trembled behind his counter at the rage of an angry author, history records not. But no publisher of a review, no reviewer, ever received rougher handling from rival critics, or has endured more obloquy in later times. It is somewhat difficult to form a just estimate of the character of a publisher, who, from the very nature of his principal undertaking, was in a position to excite a good deal of contemporary animosity. Nor is it very easy to determine whether he was a successor of the old race who paid needy writers the wretched wages of their task-work, upon the principle by which "sweating" tailors in our day have been said to accumulate large fortunes. Ralph Griffiths, who established the 'Monthly Review' in 1749, chose for his sign in St. Paul's Churchyard the enigmatical name of 'The Dunciad.' Of course this was meant to imply that the new Review was to be a terror to the Dunces, just in the same way that a new critical journal that came out of the North in October, 1802, chose for its motto "*Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur.*" But when 'The Critical Review' was set up by Archibald Hamilton in 1756, the dunces were

* Jacob Robinson was a bookseller in Fleet-street. Warburton was a writer in 'The Works of the Learned;' and in that publication he wrote the letters defending Pope's 'Essay on Man,' from the strictures of M. de Crousaz.

held to congregate under the old sign, which Griffiths had removed to a new shop in Paternoster Row. The 'Monthly Review' was pronounced by its fierce rival, 'The Critical' which Smollett conducted, to be "written by a parcel of obscure hirelings, under the restraint of a bookseller and his wife, who presume to revise, alter, and amend, the articles occasionally." At this time Goldsmith had been taken by Griffiths from his occupation as an usher at Dr. Milner's school at Peckham, to become a monthly reviewer, under an agreement for a year that he was to receive board and lodging in Griffiths' house, and to be paid in addition a small salary. The most popular author of the Johnsonian era, who was then in his twenty-ninth year, had then published nothing which could give the least notion of the peculiar charm of his writings, or prove to the bookseller, who was experimenting upon a new hand, that it would be said of him that "he touched nothing which he did not adorn." Goldsmith's life with Griffiths must, no doubt, have been a hard and an unpleasant one; ill-paid, and adding very little to his reputation. But, as far as may be judged from very imperfect records, reviewing at or near the period when George III. came to the throne was not a very profitable employment. Dr. Shebbeare, a reviewer in the middle of the century, who was, no doubt, paid highly in proportion to his power of saying bitter things, was said to have received six guineas a sheet. Johnson, in 1783, when the price of literary labour had at least risen fifty per cent., doubted the fact, and said, "Sir, he might get six guineas for a particular sheet, but not *communibus sheetibus*."

The articles contributed by Goldsmith from April to September, 1757, are twelve in number. They are reprinted in Mr. Cunningham's edition of Goldsmith's works. There are four other articles by Goldsmith contributed to Griffiths' Review in December, 1758. In the interval the reviewer had quitted his employer, his garret, and his daily pittance. The articles written for the Review by Goldsmith have been ascertained from an inspection of Griffiths' own marked copy of the 'Monthly Review,' which is now in the Bodleian Library. Including the extracts, they occupy in the reprint only seventy pages. Griffiths, it is said, accused Goldsmith of idleness. "Nor," says Mr. Forster, "would the reproach appear to be groundless, if the amount of his labour for Griffiths were to be measured by those portions only which have been traced; but this would be simply absurd, for the mass of it undoubtedly has perished."* That Griffiths was a hard task-master we may conclude, without attempting to shew that Goldsmith was a diligent and faithful performer of the duties he had undertaken. But there is a letter extant which sufficiently proves that the prosperous bookseller was coarse-minded and unfeeling as regards one who was

"In wit a man, simplicity a child."

But the publisher of 'The Monthly Review' must have had higher qualities than those which fitted him to be a slave-driver of hackney writers. Josiah Wedgwood was his intimate friend, and writing to

* 'Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith.' Ed. 1855, p. 78.

his brother, in 1765, he says of this harsh man, who might be supposed to be utterly unloveable, "You know he hath one of the warmest places in my heart."* Wedgwood also refers, more than once, to "the dining-room at Turnham Green." In this villa the bookseller, no doubt, gave better dinners than Goldsmith was accustomed to eat over the shop in Paternoster Row. Let me not dwell upon the shadow of Ralph Griffiths, threatening his poor author with a gaol, and calling him sharper and villain. Let me trust that the relations between publisher and author are now better understood, and that no struggling man of genius will again have to write to a bookseller in some such words as these:—"No, Sir, had I been a sharper, had I been possessed of less good nature and native generosity, I might surely now have been in better circumstances. I am guilty I own of meanness, which poverty unavoidably brings with it; my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence, but not with any remorse for being a villain; that may be a character you unjustly charge me with."

When Dr. Johnson had an audience of George III. in 1767, the King "asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom except the Monthly and Critical Reviews; and on being answered there was no other, His Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the 'Monthly Review' was done with most care, the 'Critical' upon the best principles; adding, that

* Miss Meteyard's 'Life of Wedgwood,' p. 186.

the authors of the 'Monthly Review' were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear." Impartiality from the very commencement of popular reviews would have been a very doubtful guarantee of success. They necessarily dealt with party subjects, and adopted the tone of partisans. And yet Johnson in 1776 said, talking of the Reviews, "I think them very impartial." This is certainly inconsistent with his statement that the Monthly Reviewers are for pulling down all establishments, and the Critical Reviewers are for supporting the Constitution in Church and State. Their different modes of accomplishing these feats may certainly appear very curious to the uninitiated, but we have had, and still have, many felicitous followers of the earlier masters of the reviewing art. "The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through; but lay hold of a topic, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

The first of the magazines still lives, "a prosperous Gentleman," in the most select society. The 'Monthly Review' dwindled into the grave as recently as 1829. The 'Critical' completed its shorter term of life in 1817. When Reynolds wondered that so much good writing was employed in them, as the authors were to remain unknown, Johnson had his true commercial answer, "Nay, Sir, those who write in them write well, in order to be paid well."

CHAPTER IX.

ROBERT DODSLEY.



N one of his forgotten Poems, this literary Bookseller apostrophizes the famous district in which he was born—

> "O, native Sherwood! happy were thy bard,
> Might these his rural notes, to future time,
> Boast of tall groves that, nodding o'er thy plain,
> Rise to their tuneful melody."

It was not for him, he says, without "the lore of Greece or Rome," to cherish such "vain presumption."

Robert Dodsley, born at Mansfield in 1703, is supposed to have been the son of a humble schoolmaster of that town, and to have received his only education under his father, who kept the Free-school. His early history is very imperfectly known. He was probably learning more out of doors than in his dreary school-tasks. His poem of 'Agriculture,' written in his fiftieth year, has some pleasing descriptions, which manifest a poetical acquaintance with rural life. His farce of 'The King and the Miller of Mansfield' was founded upon the traditionary ballad with which his boyhood was familiar,

before Percy and Ritson had unlocked the black-letter lore which showed how "merry Sherwood" was peopled in the good old lawless days, when honest yeomen made bold with the king's deer. Boswell said that Robert Dodsley's life should be written, "as he had been so much connected with the wits of the time, and by his literary merits had raised himself from the station of a footman." The author of 'The Muse in Livery'—a poem in some respects autobiographical—might have begun earlier in the history of his struggle upward, and have told something like the same tale which William Hutton has told of the miseries of an apprentice to a stocking weaver. But Dodsley had evidently more advantages of education than the prosperous stationer of Birmingham. His subsequent career was not unfavourable to the literary culture of a youth of observation and discretion. To Boswell's remark that Dodsley's life should be written, Johnson replied that his brother James would not thank a man for such a performance; but he added, "Dodsley himself was not unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected. When Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out, one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was once his footman.'" Dartineuf died in 1737. In 1732 Dodsley's 'Muse in Livery' was published by subscription. Let me view the Shadow of Robert in plush breeches (not yellow plush) as sketched by himself. I would place him behind the chair of the modern epicure, the reputed

son of Charles II.,—"the man who knows everything, and whom everybody knows,"—were not the footman's life which he describes more in accordance with his position as servant to the Hon. Mrs. Lowther. To that lady he dedicates 'The Muse in Livery.'

The emblematic frontispiece to this poem represents a young man with a handcuff of concentric rings, labelled "Poverty" and "Ignorance." He has wrenched the other hand out of its fetters, and points to the sun as typical of his poetical aspirations. It must be confessed that the pair of wings, which ornament the liberated hand, would scarcely seem formed for very high flights, if we may judge from the strains in which he describes the first duties of the morning, which are "cleaning glasses, knives, and plate." He neglects not his own person—

> "I clean my buckles, black my shoes,
> Powder my wig, and brush my clothes."

Robert was certainly not in such a genteel service as Fielding has described, in his survey of the 'Picture of Dependence,' like a kind of ladder;—"Early in the morning comes the postilion, or some other boy, which great families, no more than great ships, are without, and falls to brushing the clothes of John the footman; who, being dressed himself, applies his hands to the same labour for Mr. Second-hand, the squire's gentleman." I shall not attempt to follow the author of 'The Muse in Livery' through his labour of parading before his lady's chair with a lighted flambeau, nor in the diversions of the servants'-hall, which are so distasteful to him.

One part of his daily duty appears to have been congenial to the reflective footman; the waiting at dinner:—

> "This is the only pleasant hour,
> Which I have in the twenty-four;
> For whilst I unregarded stand,
> With ready salver in my hand,
> And seem to understand no more
> Than just what's called for out to pour,
> I hear and mark the courtly phrases,
> And all the elegance that passes."

Robert was thus completing his education, and he applied his talents to better purpose than following the advice of Swift to the footman:—"Learn all the new-fashion words, and oaths, and songs, and scraps of plays that your memory can hold. Thus you will become the delight of nine ladies in ten, and the envy of ninety-nine beaux in a hundred." He was not destined to "the highest of all indignities," according to the great satirist, "to grow old in the office of a footman." He did not escape from this fate, by obtaining a "place at court," or "a command in the army," or "by going upon the road." He had the footman's opportunities of frequenting the play-house, and he could listen to the wit of the dinner-table, when Dartineuf was host and Pope the guest. He wrote 'The Toy Shop.' From the time when Pope was induced to read the footman's dramatic satire, and procured the lively piece to be acted, Dodsley's fortune was changed. The great poet gave him a more substantial patronage. "He assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds that he might open

a shop." So Johnson briefly records an act of generosity on the part of one who "was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it." It is to be assumed that the friendly notice by Pope of the clever footman must have been founded upon many opportunities of observation. The invalid is described as having been a troublesome visitor at great houses. "His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him, and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages." With his literary tastes, our Robert might have been more than usually attentive to the greatest writer of his time; and Pope, with his accurate knowledge of human nature, might have distinguished between the interested servility of a menial, and the homage of a humble admirer. Davies has recorded that, when the poet's servant brought his master's scarlet cloak to the theatre, Quin insisted upon the honour of putting it on him. When the chair was waiting in the hall, for the sickly guest to depart, there was one footman who might have pressed forward to assist him, without expecting to receive something more than his share of the *vails* of his fellows.

In 1735 Robert Dodsley opened his shop in Pall Mall. When the bookseller here set up Tully's head over his door, the street does not appear to have had any character as a seat of literature, and little as a street of fashion. Marlborough House was shut in by mean tenements, and here Old Sarah, the Duchess, lived on, and received in 1740 a deputation from the

City, "sitting up in her bed." Schomberg House was no longer a ducal residence, but was partly occupied by a painter. Carlton House, which had been transferred by the Countess Dowager of Burlington to Frederick Prince of Wales, was under a process of renovation and adornment, when Dodsley became the neighbour of the father of George III. A century was to elapse before Pall Mall was to be famous for the splendour of its Club-houses. But in 1735 it had its "Liberty, or Rump-Steak Club." Gibbon, in 1762, enjoyed his evenings at the Cocoa Tree, with "twenty or thirty, perhaps, of the first men of the kingdom in point of fashion and fortune, supping at little tables covered with a napkin, in the middle of a coffee-room, upon a bit of cold meat or a sandwich, and drinking a glass of punch." In spite of these associations with Pall Mall, it was not an exclusively genteel quarter when Dodsley here made his first commercial venture. The street was unpaved. The amusements which it offered were few, in addition to the usual bustle of St. James's on Court days. In 1733, on an afternoon in October, to supply the want of excitement, a race was run through the length of this thoroughfare, by four women, for a prize of a Holland smock, a cap, checked stockings and laced shoes. So great was the attraction of these Amazonian feats, that the High-Constable of Westminster, a resident in Pall Mall, afterwards offered a prize of a laced hat to be run for by five men. When Mr. Dodsley took up his station here the magistrates had forbidden the repetition of such amusements. The street was left to its pristine

dulness. The cumbrous coach sometimes rolled along; and when the evening hour of visiting arrived, the flambeau lighted up the gloom, when it was carried before my lady's chair, as Robert, the footman, had carried it a few years before. When some of his old parti-coloured brethren lounged about the street, after their due refection at the Star and Garter, did they peep curiously into his shop, to see how he looked behind his counter in plain broad cloth, an unpowdered wig, and lace ruffles, and with what an independent, yet modest air, he answered the questions of some fashionable customer, who treated him not as a lackey but as a gentleman?

In the spring of 1738, a burly man was rolling along the labyrinth of dirty streets and alleys that then separated Oxford Market from Pall Mall, and finally halted at Mr. Dodsley's shop. To the bookseller he presented a note of introduction from Mr. Cave. It was the busy time of day, and the London season was then at its height; so that the proposition of Mr. Cave's friend to read to Mr. Dodsley a poem which he drew out of his pocket was courteously evaded. "If you will entrust the manuscript to me I should prefer reading it at my first leisure hour." "Well, Sir, you may be right, I have a horror myself of being read to. My mind always runs before the reader. I am too impatient, Sir, of the slow process of listening. Yes, Sir, I will leave it with you." The author calls again after a few days. Mr. Dodsley has read the poem, and thinks it a creditable thing to be concerned in. Mr. Johnson has told the bookseller, as he had

previously told the printer of St. John's Gate, that he was at liberty to alter any stroke of satire in this imitation of Juvenal that he might dislike. Dodsley perhaps, had too high a respect for a poet's art to be forward in making objections. He had incurred some chance of danger, when, earlier in the year, he had published Paul Whitehead's poem of 'Manners,' regardless of the "fell harpy that hovers o'er the press." Dodsley could see nothing in 'London' that could be deemed personal satire; so he agreed to Johnson's terms. "Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem, and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead." On the same morning of May that 'London' was published came out Pope's 'One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight, a Dialogue something like Horace.' Tremendous was the power of this satire. Walpole is dealt gently with; but the great minister's slaves are scourged mercilessly as they crowd round the triumphal car of Vice, and

> "Hear her black trumpet through the land proclaim,
> That not to be corrupted is the shame."

Paul Whitehead had written, even before the publication of Pope's most daring satire—

> "Pope writes unhurt—but know, 'tis different quite
> To beard the lion, and to crush the mite."

But Whitehead had attacked one who was more sensitive than a Prime Minister—an eloquent and controversial bishop. Sherlock, then Bishop of Salisbury, moved in the House of Lords, at the

beginning of 1739, that Paul Whitehead should be called to the bar. The sagacious Paul had absconded, and had left Dodsley to bear the punishment due to such boldness as described the bishop as "The learned Levite" whose earthly vote is sold; and proclaimed that

"Henley's shop and Sherlock's are the same."

A vigorous opposition was made against the motion to punish the bookseller, and he got off with a heavy payment for fees. His friend Pope considered that this proceeding was meant as a hint to himself.

Dodsley went steadily forward in drawing around him at Pall Mall new friends, and he appears never to have lost the confidence of old ones. He was sufficiently intimate with Pope to have been present at his first interview with Warburton, in 1740. This meeting took place in Lord Radnor's garden, near Pope's Villa. Dodsley described it to Warton, and expressed his astonishment at the high-flown compliments which the poet paid to the author of 'The Divine Legation.' Spence is included amongst his early patrons, in one of the scurrilous publications which Curll levelled against his old enemy of 'The Dunciad:'

"'Tis kind, indeed, a livery Muse to aid,
Who scribbles farces to augment his trade.
Where you, and Spence, and Glover drive the nail,
The devil's in it if the plot should fail."

Dodsley's farces, which he published after he became a bookseller, were 'The King and the Miller of Mansfield,' 'Sir John Cockle at Court,' and 'The

Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green.' In 1741 he made one of his very few unsuccessful speculations. He brought out 'The Public Register.' Whilst 'The Gentleman's Magazine' and 'The London Magazine' were flourishing in their monthly attractions, it was not very presumptuous for a man who could write well himself, and could secure good writers, to believe that a 'Weekly Magazine' might be successful. It reached only twenty-four numbers. Such was the subservience of the journalism of that time that he complains, in his concluding Address, that the established magazines had used their influence to prevent the newspapers advertising his publication.

In 1744 Dodsley edited and published the work by which his merit as a man of letters has been best appreciated in more recent times. The 'Select Collection of Old Plays' was a noble endeavour to make the dramatists who were the precursors, contemporaries, or immediate successors of Shakspere familiar to modern readers. The editor, in his Preface, says:—"When I first conceived the design of collecting together the best and scarcest of our old plays, I had no intention to do more than search out the several authors, select what was good from each, and give as correct an edition of them as I could." The public encouragement led him to think of prefixing to each play a brief account of the life and writings of its author, and an historical essay on the rise and progress of the English stage. When I reflect upon the difficulties that Robert Dodsley must have encountered from want of materials, and the corruption of the various texts of single plays, I cannot but

admire the zeal and good taste with which he accomplished this labour. Isaac Reed published a new edition of this collection in 1780. Even then he says, "The works of our ancient dramatic writers have suffered a very long and, some few excepted, a very general neglect. Though possessed of innumerable beauties, they have been known in so imperfect a manner that their very names have almost escaped the readers of the present times." Making some valuable additions to the original works, and bringing to its editorship an amount of critical knowledge which few possessed when Dodsley undertook the publication, he does justice to the merits of his predecessor:—"The first edition of the present volumes was one of the many excellent plans produced by the late Mr. Robert Dodsley; a man to whom literature is under so many obligations that it would be unpardonable to neglect this opportunity of informing those who may have received any pleasure from the work, that they owe it to a person whose merit and abilities raised him from an obscure situation in life to affluence and independence. . . . . He was a generous friend, an encourager of men of genius; and acquired the esteem and respect of all who were acquainted with him. It was his happiness to pass the greater part of his life with those whose names will be revered by posterity, by most of whom he was loved as much for the virtues of his heart as he was admired on account of his excellent writings." I may be forgiven if I pursue the story of such an old bookseller into details which may be considered tedious or unnecessary.

'The Preceptor,' compiled by Dodsley, and published by him in 1748, was described with much justice as "one of the most valuable books for the improvement of young minds that has appeared in any language." This eulogium by Boswell was introductory to the statement that Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. 'The Preceptor' has been superseded by elementary books which have kept pace with the advance of knowledge, but it has merits which well adapted it to the purposes of self-instruction. It is a book upon which I myself look back with agreeable recollections, such as are not associated with more pretentious guides to general knowledge. A smaller work, written by Dodsley, which also appeared about the same time, was formerly known in every circle of English readers. 'The Economy of Human Life, translated from an Indian Manuscript, written by an Ancient Brahmin,' derived something of its extraordinary popularity from a belief that it was the composition of Lord Chesterfield. But its intrinsic merits soon secured, and long preserved, for it a place in every collection of books in which moral precepts are presented in an attractive form. The chief attraction of this little book was to be found in its approach to an imitation of the language of the Sacred Writings. But it was justly remarked by a contemporary reviewer, that "the style and manner are so much beneath the great original from which they are copied, that the precept is rather enfeebled than enforced by the imitation."

In 1758 Dodsley completed 'A Collection of Poems, in six volumes, by several hands.' The

volumes appeared at intervals from 1748. Boswell writes in 1776: "I related a dispute between Goldsmith and Mr. Robert Dodsley one day when they and I were dining at Tom Davies's, in 1762. Goldsmith asserted that there was no poetry produced in this age. Dodsley appealed to his own Collection, and maintained that though they could not find a palace like Dryden's 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,' you had villages composed of very pretty houses, and he mentioned particularly 'The Spleen.'" Johnson replied that 'The Spleen' in Dodsley's Collection, upon which he chiefly rested, is not poetry. It seems odd that this poem should have been cited even as one of the prettiest of village houses, for it has few lines above the common level, if I except an image that has been often quoted:

> "To cure the mind's wrong bias, Spleen,
> Some recommend the bowling-green;
> Some, hilly walks; all, exercise;
> Fling but a stone, the giant dies."

In this Collection there are several poems that have maintained a more enduring reputation than this, by Mr. Matthew Green, of the Custom-House. There is Dyer's 'Grongar Hill,' Shenstone's 'Schoolmistress,' Collins's 'Ode to Evening,' Gray's 'Distant Prospect of Eton College,' and half-a-dozen others, that long held their honoured place in Enfield's 'Speaker,' and similar books for youth. Many of these pieces were original contributions; others were inserted with the laudable desire "to preserve to the public those poetical performances which seemed to merit a longer remembrance that what

would probably be secured to them by the manner wherein they were originally published."

Towards the middle of the century I trace James, a brother of Robert Dodsley, occupying a position in the business at Pall Mall. He was twenty-two years younger than Robert, so that when he was a listener to a remarkable conversation, in 1745, which he mentioned in later years to Boswell, he had just attained his majority. The youth had by that time become familiar with the singular appearance and grotesque habits of the author of 'London,' but he had also witnessed the deference with which Robert invariably treated this personage. The restless head, under the wig all awry, has suddenly become fixed in its attention, as the bookseller says to him, "Would you allow me to suggest that an English Dictionary would be a work eminently fitted for you to undertake. We want a dictionary, not filled with technical words, like Bailey's, but one in which examples of the uses of words should be furnished by quotations from our best writers." "Do you speak seriously, Sir, as a matter of business?" said Mr. Johnson. "Certainly, I am sure I could easily find associates in such an honourable undertaking. I would speak to ——" "Sir, I believe I shall not undertake it." "I hope," said Mr. Dodsley, "that you will not hastily decide against my suggestion." "No, Sir, no; I have thought of such a thing before." "The labour would be worthy of you, Sir." "The dictionary-maker is a mere pioneer of literature. I scarcely desire to be such a slave." "Mr. Pope," replied Dodsley, "did not take that view of the matter. He

had made some collections of authorities from the best writers, and I believe I could put these papers into your hands." Mr. Johnson went his way in a more abstracted state of mind than when he entered the shop. After a sufficient time for consideration, he published a plan of the dictionary, addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield, then one of the Secretaries of State. This was at the desire of Dodsley, who was patronised by the Peer, of whom it was afterwards said by the author of the dictionary, "This man I thought had been a lord among wits, but I find he is only a wit among lords." In connexion with Mr. Andrew Millar, Messrs. Knapton, Messrs. Longman, and Mr. Hitch, Dodsley became a proprietor of the copyright of the dictionary. Although he had suggested the undertaking and by his recommendation had procured the employment of Johnson upon the work, Millar took its principal management, as it proceeded through the press. During the seven years in which this great labour was proceeding, Johnson was in the habit of receiving advances from Millar, which made the booksellers impatient for its termination. The six amanuenses were at last dismissed; the final copy was sent to Mr. Millar; and when his messenger returned, Johnson asked him, "Well! what did he say?" "Sir, he said 'Thank God, I have done with him.'" The bookseller probably did not mean to be ill-natured, and the author was not angry when he exclaimed, "I am glad that he thanks God for anything."

In January, 1753, Dodsley commenced the publication of a periodical paper, called 'The World.' Whilst 'The Rambler' was entirely the work of one

man, and was continued twice a week without intermission for two years, 'The World' was the production of many contributors, and only made its appearance weekly. The stately sentences and lofty morality of Johnson were essentially contrasted with the plan of this new paper, which was "to ridicule, with novelty and good humour, the fashions, follies, vices, and absurdities of that part of the human species which calls itself The World." Dodsley, who suggested the title, was enabled to gather around him writers well qualified to carry out such a scheme. They were mostly men who knew the manners of what is called the best society from a more intimate acquaintance than that furnished by coffee-houses. They had in this respect a just claim to be considered the natural successors of the great Essayists of the reign of Anne. Edward Moore, who was the caterer for the work, and received from Dodsley three guineas for every paper written by himself or others, was the friend of Lord Lyttelton, who procured for him the gratuitous assistance of Lord Chesterfield, Richard Owen Cambridge, Horace Walpole, and others who belonged to the fashionable circles. Chesterfield contributed many papers which were equally distinguished for wit and good taste. Of this number of articles, two were destined to attract more attention in later times than any other of this collection of essays. Number 100 thus commences: "I heard the other day with great pleasure, from my worthy friend Mr. Dodsley, that Mr. Johnson's English Dictionary, with a grammar and history of our language prefixed, will be published this winter in two large

volumes in folio." It was in vain that the famous Peer attempted to atone for some neglect of the struggling scholar when he wrote: "Perfection is not to be expected from man; but if we are to judge by the various works of Mr. Johnson already published, we have good reason to believe that he will bring this as near to perfection as any man could do." Johnson was informed by Dodsley that the two papers in 'The World' were written by Lord Chesterfield; and they produced that celebrated letter of which the burning words have been impressed upon many a writer's memory, who has been doomed to disappointment in his early career: "Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help?" Dodsley spoke with the feelings of an *old* bookseller when he said that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter, for that he had a property in the dictionary to which Lord Chesterfield's patronage might have been of consequence. What bookseller of a century later would not have rejoiced, that a letter so calculated to rivet public attention upon the forthcoming work was hurled at the pride of rank by one who was not displeased with being called "the prouder man of the two?"

In the opening of this chapter I have quoted four lines from Dodsley's poem of 'Agriculture.' This production, in three cantos, was only a portion of a larger poem which he contemplated, entitled, 'Public Virtue.' Sixteen years after Dodsley's death, Johnson spoke of it with contempt: "It was fine *blank*" (sneering, as he usually did, at blank-verse): "how-

ever this miserable poem did not sell; and my poor friend Doddy said Public Virtue was not a subject to interest the age." Yet there are few more pleasing descriptions than a passage in 'Agriculture,' in which the merits of landscape-gardening are set forth, in contrast with

> "the regular deformity
> Of plans by line and compass, rules abhorr'd,
> In Nature's free plantations."

From his friend, the Rev. Joseph Spence, he had probably derived the taste and knowledge requisite for the appreciation of what was then almost a new art. At Byfleet, in Surrey, the successful author of 'Polymetis,' and the now better known collector of 'Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men,' employed many years of his blameless life in making the grounds around his seat a model of "the reformed style of picturesque gardening." Byfleet once attracted almost as much notice as the Leasowes. Dodsley seems to point to Shenstone and his achievements in the following passage, which I may be permitted to extract, as no one is likely to take the trouble to look at the poem:—

> "There from his forming hand new scenes arise,
> The fair creation of his fancy's eye.
> Lo! bosom'd in the solemn shady grove,
> Whose reverend branches wave on yonder hill,
> He views the moss-grown temple's ruin'd tower,
> Cover'd with creeping ivy's cluster'd leaves;
> The mansion seeming of some rural god,
> Whom nature's choristers, in untaught hymns
> Of wild yet sweetest harmony, adore.
> From the bold brow of that aspiring steep,
> Where hang the nibbling flocks, and view below

Their downward shadows in the grassy wave,
What pleasing landscapes spread before his eye!
Of scatter'd villages, and winding streams,
And meadows green, and woods, and distant spires,
Seeming, above the blue horizon's bound,
To prop the canopy of Heav'n. Now lost
Amidst a glooming wilderness of shrubs,
The golden orange, arbute ever green,
The early-blooming almond, feathery pine,
Fair opulus, to spring, to autumn dear,
And the sweet shades of varying verdure, caught
From soft Acacia's gently-waving branch,
Heedless he wanders: while the grateful scents
Of sweet-briar, roses, honeysuckles wild,
Regale the smell; and to th' enchanted eye,
Mezereon's purple, laurustinus' white,
And pale laburnum's pendent flowers display
Their different beauties. O'er the smooth-shorn grass
His lingering footsteps leisurely proceed,
In meditation deep.—When, hark! the sound
Of distant water steals upon his ear;
And sudden opens to his pausing eye
The rapid rough cascade, from the rude rock
Down dashing in a stream of lucid foam:
Then glides away, meandering o'er the lawn,
A liquid surface; shining seen afar,
At intervals, beneath the shadowy trees;
Till lost and buried in the distant grove.
Wrapt into sacred musing, he reclines
Beneath the covert of embowering shades;
And, painting to his mind the bustling scenes
Of pride and bold ambition, pities kings."

Dodsley wrote a prose description of the Leasowes, which, after Shenstone's death, he prefixed to an edition of his works. He visited Shenstone, in company with Spence, in 1758. Ninety years after this, Hugh Miller went out of his route to see the Leasowes. There is no more beautiful local description

than that of his visit to the creations of Shenstone, which were changed, indeed, but not obliterated. His account is thus introduced: "Shenstone was one of the ten or twelve English poets whose works I had the happiness of possessing when a boy, and which, during some eight or ten years of my life—for books at the time formed luxuries of difficult procurement, and I had to make the most of those I had—I used to read over and over, at the rate of about twice in the twelvemonth. And every time I read the poems I was sure also to read Dodsley's appended description of the Leasowes. I could never form from it any idea of the place as a whole; the imagery seemed broken up into detached slips, like the imagery of a magic-lantern; but then nothing could be finer than the insulated slips; and my mind was filled with gorgeous pictures, all fresh and bright, of 'sloping groves,' 'tufted knolls,' 'wooded valleys,' 'sequestered lakes,' and 'noisy rivulets,'—of rich grassy lawns, and cascades that come bursting in foam from bosky hill-sides,—of monumental urns, tablets, and temples,—of hermitages and priories; and I had now come to see in what degree my conceptions, drawn from the description, corresponded with the original, if, indeed, the original still maintained the impress given it by the genius of Shenstone." It was something for the bookseller—"the poetic bibliopole," as Miller calls him—to have written a 'Guide Book' that could, after the lapse of many years, interest others than the ordinary run of sight-seers. "Much about the time when young Walter Scott was gloating over Dodsley, and wishing he, too,

had a property of which to make a plaything, what Shenstone had built and inscribed on the Leasowes could be known but from Dodsley alone. His artificialities had perished, like the artificialities of another kind of the poets his contemporaries; and nothing survived in his more material works, as in their writings, save those delightful portions in which he had but given body and expression to the harmonies of nature." *

During his long course of bookselling and writing, Dodsley was never exhorted, as an Edinburgh reviewer exhorted Mr. Mawman, in 1806, "not to take the bread out of the mouths of his authors, nor to ruin the mystery of bookmaking, by combining it with a much more lucrative occupation." He was a publisher of numerous Plays, amongst others, of Brooke's 'Gustavus Vasa;' of Johnson's 'Irene;' of Whitehead's 'Roman Father,' and his 'Creusa, Queen of Athens;' of Young's 'Brothers;' of Morgan's 'Philoclea;' of Jones's 'Earl of Essex.' Yet his authors do not appear to have manifested any jealousy when they beheld their publisher amongst the successful writers of Tragedy. One dramatist, Dr. John Brown, author of 'Barbarossa,' was either mad or jealous, when he wrote to the man who had become eminent both as bookseller and author—"Footman's language I never return." Horace Walpole relates this with generous indignation; saying to George Montagu, "You know how decent, humble, inoffensive a creature Dodsley is; how little apt to forget or disguise his having been a

* 'First Impressions of England and its People.'

footman." Johnson has described the first representation of 'Cleone:' "The two Wartons just looked into the town, and were taken to see 'Cleone,' where David [Garrick] says, they were starved for want of company to keep them warm. David and Doddy have had a new quarrel, and, I think, cannot conveniently quarrel any more. 'Cleone' was well acted by all the characters; but Bellamy left nothing to be desired. I went the first night, and supported it as well as I might; for Doddy, you know, is my patron, and I would not desert him. The play was very well received. Doddy, after the danger was over, went every night to the stage-side, and cried at the distress of poor Cleone." The quarrel with Garrick is described by Davies. "It was his misfortune to err egregiously, both in the choice and the rejection of new plays. In the years 1756, 1758, 1759, he successively rejected the 'Douglas' of Mr. John Home, Dodsley's 'Cleone,' and the 'Orphan of China,' by Mr. Murphy."* Dodsley might have patiently borne the rejection, had not Garrick adopted some very illiberal means to prevent its success at the rival theatre. An author crying over the distress of his heroine is certainly an uncommon exhibition of what we may call a morbid vanity. Yet there is probably some fascination in the dramatic form of poetical composition which made Dodsley weep when he listened to his own words. Talfourd rarely lost an opportunity of reciting 'Ion,' not for the gratification of others, but whenever he could escape from company to the greater happiness of his own complacent musings. Yet this most ami-

* 'Life of Garrick,' vol. i. 249.

able and accomplished lawyer never obtruded his scenes and characters. He solaced himself with them in his solitary walks, or in the silence of the night. Though Dodsley wept over his own dialogue, yet when he was told that Johnson held that for pathetic effect no play of Otway's could compete with 'Cleone,' he exclaimed with undoubted sincerity, 'It is too much.'"

It is quite time that I should leave the author and return to the bookseller. There is one publication that issued in 1759 from the shop in Pall Mall, which has enjoyed a century's vitality. Three years before the publication of the 'Annual Register,' a young Irishman, who had been in London for some time, applied to Dodsley to publish a little tract, entitled 'A Vindication of Natural Society, &c., by a late Noble Writer.' The applicant was probably known to the booksellers as one supposed to be a writer for newspapers and periodical works, but who did not appear to be following the profession of the law, which it was understood that he had come to town to pursue, when he was entered at the Middle Temple. It is probable that Edmund Burke did not at first communicate to the bookseller the secret of the 'Vindication of Natural Society.' It was published originally without an explanatory Preface, and was generally believed to be a posthumous work of Lord Bolingbroke. The flowing and eloquent style, the whole scope of the reasoning, were so characteristic of the great writer and statesman, that few would conclude that it was a wonderful imitation, produced by a person of original genius and accurate know-

ledge. When the fabrication was avowed, the real author explained his design, which was, "to show that without the exertion of any considerable powers the same engines which were employed for the destruction of Religion might be employed with equal success for the subversion of Government." Dodsley soon after published for his new friend the 'Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful.' The 'History of the European Settlements in America,' though published anonymously, is undoubtedly Burke's work. His power of historical narrative was here exhibited; and Dodsley made a wise decision when he selected this rising man as the conductor and chief writer of 'The Annual Register.' For many years Burke continued to write the historical portion. He had higher ideas than those of a dry annalist when he engaged in this congenial labour; and when he undertook, in this volume for 1758, to narrate the events of a war carried on in the four quarters of the world, he accomplished a task which the dull chroniclers who preceded him seldom thought capable of being made acceptable to the critical as well as to the cursory reader, by accuracy and extent of research, and by vigour and elegance of style. The connexion of the greatest philosophical statesman of modern times long continued with the Dodsleys. When Robert died, his brother James succeeded to the flourishing business, in which he had previously been a partner. His was a long career of honourable prosperity. Like the elder of these deserving men, he seems never to have lost any of his earlier supporters. James Dodsley, in 1790, published Burke's famous 'Re-

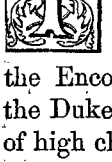
flections on the Revolution in France,' of which it is recorded by Nichols that he sold eighteen thousand copies. For some years before his death, in 1797, he kept no public shop, but was a wholesale dealer in books which were his own copyright.

Robert Dodsley died in 1764, when on a visit to Mr. Spence, who was a prebendary of the Cathedral of Durham. He was buried in the Abbey Church-yard there; and his epitaph was written by this warm and constant friend:—

"If you have any respect
for uncommon industry and merit,
regard this place,
in which are deposited the remains of
MR. ROBERT DODSLEY;
who, as an Author, raised himself
much above what could have been expected
from one in his rank of life,
and without a learned education;
and who, as a man, was scarce
exceeded by any in integrity of heart,
and purity of manners and conversation.
He left this life for a better,
Sept. 25, 1764,
In the 61st year of his age."

CHAPTER X.

ANDREW MILLAR; CADELL AND STRAHAN.



N 1736 the booksellers of London were threatened with a competition which appeared likely to assume a very formidable character. A Society was established for the Encouragement of Learning. Of this Society the Duke of Richmond was the President; noblemen of high character were members of its Committee of Management; learned doctors and professors were also of this committee; and literature had its representatives in the persons of Paul Whitehead and James Thomson. The Secretary of this society was an enthusiastic Scot, Alexander Gordon, who, ten years before, had his head full of a project to make a communication by a canal between the Clyde and the Forth, and who is described as having "made trial of all the ways by which a man could get an honest livelihood." There is extant a letter from this gentleman in which he informs Dr. Richardson, the Master of Emanuel College, Cambridge, how they are determined to spare neither pains nor charges in what they shall publish. "In fine," he writes, "nothing is wanting but to set out with some author of genius or note, in order to give the public a specimen of their desire to serve them as well as the

author." He solicits therefore the good offices of Dr. Richardson to induce Dr. Middleton, who, he hears, is engaged upon the Life of Cicero, to give the Society the offer of publishing it. He adds "that in point of interest, it will be a little estate to the author whose work they begin with, for every mortal will buy it." Conyers Middleton was obstinate enough to take what was then the usual course—publishing by subscription; and he made "a little estate" out of his two quarto volumes, although he had not the *imprimatur* of the Duke of Richmond. It was rather an evil omen also, that one of the most unmanageable and disputatious of English scholars turned away, and would not swallow the tempting bait. Gordon writes: "You have no doubt heard in what a discouraging way Dr. Bentley has used our Society: for, though his work of Manilius was ready to be printed, and he desired by several persons to have it published by the Society, he not only raised such ill-grounded objections against the institution itself, but chose to throw it into the hands of a common bookseller, than in those of the Society, which has not only made several gentlemen of letters and high life exclaim against the discouraging and ungenerous act, but will be recorded to the learned world, perhaps, when he is dead and rotten." * The Society, for the Encouragement of Learning, never proposed to accomplish any end beyond what was being accomplished by booksellers in the regular way of trade. It had no purpose of making knowledge more accessible to the general community by popularising it, or by promoting the

* Nichols's 'Literary Anecdotes,' vol. ii. p. 92.

cheapness of books. It dragged on an existence for twelve years, sometimes contracting with booksellers, sometimes publishing on its own account at its own shop. It made an end, without publishing any work that had a chance of being profitable either to author or bookseller, and it left to some of its patrons, irresponsible or not, a legacy of two thousand pounds debt. Mr. Gordon had proclaimed as an argument for influencing Dr. Middleton, that "it is as much the duty of a great author to lend a helping hand to encourage and countenance so laudable an institution as is that of this Society, as it is for the Society to assist and encourage the author." The great author would not listen to the voice of the charmer. James Thomson might have been flattered by sitting at the same board with dukes and earls, but he was not induced by their blandishments to desert his old friend, Andrew Millar, who had published the 'Seasons' in 1730, and who continued to be his publisher till his poetical career was closed with 'The Castle of Indolence,' in 1748.

Boswell records that, in 1755, when Millar had been established in London about a quarter of a century, Johnson said of him, "I respect Millar, sir. He has raised the price of literature." The liberality of the bookseller in the purchase of copyrights was one of the principal causes of his own success. Many "a great author" was willing "to lend a helping hand" to him. "During the better half of the past century," writes the worthy John Nichols, "Jacob Tonson and Andrew Millar were the best *patrons* of literature, a fact rendered unquestionable by the valuable works produced under their fostering and

genial hands." Again: "That eminent bookseller, Andrew Millar, the steady *patron* of Thomson and Fielding, and many other eminent authors." Yet it was long a pleasant delusion of the old booksellers, that patronage of authors had only changed from the Mæcenas of the Cabinet to the Mæcenas of the Counting-house. If the literary gossip of the last century is to be credited, Millar made more thousands by Fielding's novels than he paid hundreds to the needy and extravagant author. If Thomson's 'Liberty' were a bad bargain, 'The Seasons' must have been "a little estate." Millar had seen the separate poems of 'Winter,' 'Summer,' 'Spring,' growing into popularity in the hands of other booksellers. He published 'Autumn,' and then the complete poem, 'The Seasons,' as it has come down to us, to be multiplied again and again by generations of publishers.

Millar, and the booksellers of the middle of the last century, gave large sums for copyright, because it was then considered a perpetuity. They were, of course, often mistaken in their estimates of value. When Lord Bolingbroke died in 1751, he left all his writings, published and unpublished, to Mr. Mallet. The fact has been preserved from oblivion by Johnson's invective, that one scoundrel loaded a blunderbuss and left another half-a-crown to fire it off. Davies, a good authority, says—"Mallet dreamt of getting golden mountains by Bolingbroke's legacy. He was so sanguine in his expectations, that he rejected the offer of three thousand pounds, tendered to him by Mr. Millar, the bookseller, for the copyright of that nobleman's works; at the same time he was so dis-

tressed for ready cash, that he was forced to borrow money of Mr. Millar, to pay his stationer and printer." Mallet published Bolingbroke's works on his own account, in five volumes quarto. Davies says that the edition was not sold off in twenty years. Upon the supposed perpetuity of a copyright, there is an interesting passage in Boswell's Johnson, under the date of 1763:—"Mr. Alexander Donaldson, bookseller of Edinburgh, had for some time opened a shop in London, and sold his cheap editions of the most popular English books, in defiance of the supposed common-law right of *literary property*. Johnson, though he concurred in the opinion which was afterwards sanctioned by a judgment of the House of Lords, that there was no such right, was at this time very angry that the booksellers of London, for whom he uniformly professed much regard, should suffer from an invasion of what they had ever considered to be secure; and he was loud and violent against Mr. Donaldson. 'He is a fellow who takes advantage of the law to injure his brethren; for notwithstanding that the statute secures only fourteen years of exclusive right, it has always been understood by the *trade*, that he who buys the copyright of a book from the author obtains a perpetual property; and upon that belief numberless bargains are made to transfer that property after the expiration of the statutory term. Now, Donaldson, I say, takes advantage here of people who have really an equitable title from usage; and if we consider how few of the books, of which they buy the property, succeed so well as to bring profit, we should be of opinion that the term of fourteen years is too short;

it should be sixty years.' Dempster: 'Donaldson, sir, is anxious for the encouragement of literature. He reduces the price of books, so that poor students may buy them.' Johnson (laughing): 'Well, sir, allowing that to be his motive, he is no better than Robin Hood, who robbed the rich in order to give to the poor.'"

Amongst the most successful books of modern time—a book in which the original publisher and others long retained almost a perpetuity of copyright under "an equitable title from usage"—was 'Hume's History of England.' It was published in separate volumes, and the first volume, issued at Edinburgh, included the reigns of James I. and Charles I. The author has recorded in his own life, his bitter disappointment at the mode in which it was originally received. "I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment. I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying,

the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages 'not to be discouraged.'" The subsequent success of the history is attributed by Mr. Burton in great part to the exertions of Millar. "An arrangement was made, by which he should take the History under his protection,—publish the subsequent volumes, and push the sale of the first. The arrangement is said to have been recommended by Hume's Edinburgh publishers; and it shows how much, in that age, as probably also in this, even a great work may depend on the publisher's exertions, for giving it a hold on the public mind."

Hume, mortified at the ill success of his first volumes, had determined to change his name and retire to France. The breaking out of war prevented this; and he took the better resolution to remain at home and persevere. The History was concluded in 1761. Of this period he writes in a very different tone: "Notwithstanding the variety of events and seasons to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers much exceeded anything formerly known in England. I was become not only independent but opulent."

Without altogether doubting that in the last cen-

tury, as in the present, a great work may depend for its success on the publisher's exertions, I am inclined to attribute the gradual change in the reception of Hume's History to an essential revolution in the public taste. A new class of readers had arisen, who wanted the road of historical knowledge to be made smoother and pleasanter. Hume was the first English writer who rendered History agreeable reading. It was reserved for him to take the cumbrous folios which a man could scarcely lift, much less digest, and distil them into very pleasant octavos. The old ponderous Romances had been banished by Fielding and Goldsmith. Epics, such as Blackmore produced, had given place to Legendary Tales. All knowledge was beginning to be condensed and popularized. The English History of Rapin, translated by Tindal, and continued by him, was in five volumes folio, and twenty-one volumes octavo. It was, deservedly, in high estimation; and the addition to the folios of Houbraken's Portraits rendered them alluring to many a reader who glanced at the text, and fancied he saw true representations of the Plantagenets and Tudors. The merit of Rapin and Tindal was remarkable in their abstinence from the spirit of party. Carte was, on the other hand, the most violent of partisans; and he thus destroyed the value of his unwearied research. His History, published by subscription, was proceeding successfully in its sale, till, in evil hour, he maintained that the royal virtue of curing the King's Evil was powerful in the exiled Stuarts, but had altogether departed from the House of Brunswick. His four volumes in folio went to the trunk-maker. It

was to these champions in heavy armour that Hume opposed his light weapons. The beauty of style was too much for the weight of authorities. Nearly a century was to pass over before the reputation of Hume was to be assailed by the cruelest of devices —that of fitting his book for "The Student," by changing his facts; modifying or suppressing his opinions, religious and political; and taking such liberties with his style as a bad copyist attempts with the masterpieces of a great painter.

The middle of the eighteenth century may be regarded as the great era of popular historical books. What Hume accomplished so triumphantly, in widening the circle of historical readers, was attempted with less ultimate success by Smollett. Hume took up separate portions of our annals, and proceeded towards a complete history in what may seem a very irregular order. In 1754, he produced his first volume, containing the reigns of James I. and Charles I.; and his second volume, containing the Commonwealth, and Charles II. and James II., in 1756. In 1759, he brought out the House of Tudor. In 1762, the early history to Henry VII. Smollett took a bolder grasp of the whole subject, and, at the period when Hume published his first volume on the Stuarts, produced his 'Compleat History of England, deduced from the Descent of Julius Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.' His four ponderous quarto volumes, written, it is said, in fourteen months, had some chance of superseding Hume altogether, when they were re-issued in weekly numbers, of which many thousands were sold. But when Hume had

finished his book up to the Revolution, and it was seen that his scheme would embrace the earlier periods, its manifest superiority quickly drove the rival work out of the field, and Smollett had finally to undertake the humbler labour of being the continuator of Hume. The two Scotsmen have in this relation travelled down to our own times in a very ill-assorted partnership. Nobody now hears of Smollett's 'Compleat History,' which was set forth with due parade as "Containing the transactions of one thousand eight hundred and three years." That portion of his historical labours has become as obsolete as Sir Richard Baker's 'Chronicle of the Kings of England.'

In 1776 Hume wrote to his fortunate countryman, William Strahan, "There will no books of reputation now be printed in London but through your hands and Mr. Cadell's." Thomas Cadell had been the apprentice of Andrew Millar. This apprentice, according to Mr. Nichols, combining industry with intellect, relieved his master, in a great measure, from the toil of superintending an immense concern. In 1765 Cadell became a partner, and in 1767 the founder of this business—which rivalled that of the Tonsons—retired, and, as a common consequence of the transition from a busy to an unemployed life, very soon died. Cadell became his successor. Strahan, a poor boy from Scotland, who had worked his way to opulence as a printer, and had obtained a share of the patent of King's printer, was extensively associated with Cadell in the purchase of copyrights. It was their good fortune to have their names upon the title-

pages of most of the great works of their day, and to have the ephemeral fame of the bookseller preserved, amidst many revolutions of literary fashion, in the durable lustre of Gibbon, Robertson, Adam Smith, and Blackstone.

There is little opportunity for throwing in a taste of the salt of anecdote, to season the dry details of the commerce of literature as represented by Cadell and Strahan. Dr. Johnson, who, from his earliest time to his latest, manifests almost as extensive a knowledge of "the trade" as the acutest of that body, tells us something of the complex operations by which a book travelled then, as it travels now, from the warehouse of the publisher into the hands of the private purchaser. The directors of the Clarendon Press had taken up a notion that the fraternity of booksellers, in the sale of the Oxford books, ought to be contented with less profits than upon ordinary publications. Johnson, in a letter to Dr. Wetherell, Master of University College, Oxford, says—"I suppose, with all our scholastic ignorance of mankind, we are still too knowing to expect that the booksellers will erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning." He then proceeds to point out through how many hands a book often passes before it comes into that of the reader; and what part of the profit each hand must retain as a motive for transmitting it to the next. He next tells the learned doctor of Oxford, who wanted to conduct the University's book-trade upon principles of economy that would have destroyed it, that they

must allow for profit between thirty and thirty-five per cent., between six and seven shillings in the pound. He considers that the reduction will appear very great, but goes into minute detail to show that it ought not to be refused. The lapse of a century has made very little difference in the rate of these trade allowances. Booksellers have in vain combined to prevent retailers selling at less than the usual rate of profit, and some of those who have opposed this mistake have maintained that the usual rate of profit is too high. The common sense of the question was set forth by Dr. Johnson in 1776. "We will call our primary agent in London, Mr. Cadell, who receives our books from us, gives them room in his warehouse, and issues them on demand. By him they are sold to Mr. Dilly, a wholesale bookseller, who sends them into the country; and the last seller is the country bookseller. Here are three profits to be paid between the printer and the reader, or, in the style of commerce, between the manufacturer and the consumer; and if any of these profits is too penuriously distributed, the process of commerce is interrupted."

When Hume wrote that all the books of reputation would pass through the hands of Cadell and Strahan, it was on the occasion of having received a presentation copy of the first volume of Gibbon's History. The author of that great book has told us a little of the circumstances of its publication. He was then in Parliament. He says—"The volume of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first session, was now ready

for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsley, I agreed upon easy terms with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. . . . I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any profane critic. The favour of mankind is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of the public and their favourite is productive of those warm sensibilities which at a second meeting can no longer be re-kindled. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candour of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple. A letter from Mr. Hume overpaid the

labour of ten years; but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians." Ninety years have established Gibbon as far the greatest of that triumvirate.

The writer of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' had no cause to be dissatisfied with the dealings of his publishers. A thousand copies were printed of the first edition. Of the second, he writes, "The fifteen hundred copies are moving off with decent speed, and the obliging Cadell begins to mutter something of a third edition for next year." The second volume had not then appeared. There is a document extant, presented by the publishers to the author:—

"*State of the Account of Mr. Gibbon's 'Roman Empire.' Third Edition. 1st. Vol. No.*, 1000. *April 30th*, 1777.

	£.	s.	d.
Printing 90 sheets at 1*l.* 6s., with notes at the bottom of the page	117	0	0
180 reams of paper at 19s.	171	0	0
Paid the Corrector, extra care	5	5	0
Advertisements and incidental expenses	16	15	0
	£310	0	0

	£.	s.	d.
1000 books at 16s.	800	0	0
Deduct as above	310	0	0
Profit on this edition when sold	£490	0	0

Mr. Gibbon's two-thirds is	326	13	4
Messrs. Strahan and Cadell's	163	6	8
	£490	0	0

Errors excepted."

I should be unwilling to raise any invidious comparisons between the publishers of the eighteenth and those of the nineteenth century; but, if I am not mistaken, the division of profits would,—say twenty-five years ago,—have been taken upon a different principle, and the amount would have assumed something like the following shape:—

Hypothetical Account, upon the half-profit system, of a book which costs 310*l.*

	£.	*s.*	*d.*	£.	*s.*	*d.*
1000 at 16*s.*	800	0	0			
Less 10 per cent. for publisher ..	80	0	0			
	720	0	0			
Deduct as above	310	0	0			
Profit	£410	0	0			
Mr. A. half (instead of 326*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*)				205	0	0
Messrs. B. (with 80*l.* commission)				205	0	0
				£410	0	0

I am happy to pass from such dull matters to a scene in which the merited success of author and publisher was celebrated at an appropriate convivial meeting. The book was finished in 1788, by the publication of the fourth quarto volume. Of this event, Gibbon thus writes: "The impression of the fourth volume had consumed three months. Our common interest required that we should move with a quicker pace; and Mr. Strahan fulfilled his engagement, which few printers could sustain, of delivering every week three thousand copies of nine sheets.

The day of publication was however delayed, that it might coincide with the fifty-first anniversary of my own birth-day; the double festival was celebrated by a cheerful literary dinner at Mr. Cadell's house; and I seemed to blush while they read an elegant compliment from Mr. Hayley." Gibbon does not mention who were the guests. Strahan had died in 1785. Johnson, who was ever a willing partaker of a literary dinner, whether at a bookseller's or at his club, had gone in 1784 where the voice of merriment was no more heard. There is a sketch of a dinner at which Johnson and Gibbon were present, drawn by the clever pencil of the younger Colman, in his 'Random Records:'—"The learned Gibbon was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say less learned?) Johnson. Their manners and taste, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson, in his rusty brown suit, and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology; and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon: Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant: the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets; Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys: Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens.

Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending, once or twice in the evening, to talk with me: the great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy: but it was done *more suo;*— still his mannerism prevailed; still he tapped his snuff-box; still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding, as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage."

The shadow of William Strahan flits before me in the note-books of Boswell. His father was an officer of the Customs in Scotland, and, says a writer in 'The Lounger,' "gave his son the education which every lad of decent rank then received in a country where the avenues to learning were easy, and open to men of the most moderate circumstances." He was apprenticed to a Scotch printer, and having learnt his trade, arrived in London with, what a clever novel-writer calls, "the traditional twopence-halfpenny." Johnson, who was on the most friendly terms with the printer who had risen to wealth and gave good dinners, nevertheless could not forbear to treat him with his usual sarcasms on Scotland. Strahan seems, however, to have had no fears of his friend's prejudices, eccentric habits, and dislike of conventionalities, when he was desirous that Johnson should sit by his side in Parliament. The King's printer had an official duty to perform, in buying a seat, and supporting the government. It was the

same duty which the King's turnspit had to perform.* Strahan excited no envy of his wealth or his state in the mind of Johnson. When he was taken to dinner at Kensington "in Mr. Strahan's coach," and the conversation turned upon a printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach,—Hamilton being cited as another printer who arrived at this grandeur before Strahan,—Johnson said, "He was in the right: life is short. The sooner that a man begins to enjoy his wealth the better." When Johnson and Boswell went to Scotland, the King's printer was asked by the great moralist to frank his letters, that the high position might be manifest, through the poor land, of the man who had left it with his whole wardrobe on his back. Garrick thought Strahan "an obtuse man," but Johnson asserted the printer's claim to a discriminating judgment even in the matter of an epigram. The author and the printer were near neighbours. The King's Printing Office was close to Johnson's House in Gough Square. Boswell has a pleasing anecdote arising out of this propinquity:—"Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson's recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, 'Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I'll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down.' I followed him into the court-yard, behind Mr. Strahan's house; and there I had a proof of what I heard him profess,

* See Burke's Speech on Economic Reform.

that he talked alike to all. 'Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that, I speak uniformly in as intelligible a manner as I can.' 'Well, my boy, how do you go on?' 'Pretty well, Sir; but they are afraid I ar'n't strong enough for some parts of the business.' JOHNSON: 'Why, I shall be sorry for it; for when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear—take all the pains you can; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea.'"

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN NEWBERY.



HIS old Bookseller is a very old friend of mine. He wound himself round my heart some seventy years ago, when I became possessed of an immortal volume, entitled, 'The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes.' I felt myself personally honoured in the Dedication: "To all young Gentlemen and Ladies who are Good, or intend to be Good, this Book is inscribed by their old Friend, Mr. John Newbery, in St. Paul's Churchyard." I do not recollect that I was much taken with the cuts, by Michael Angelo, as the title-page set forth. A few years later, and the Vicar of Wakefield led me into a higher region of fiction. But from that fascinating book, of which my comprehension was somewhat limited at the age of seven, I learnt how diligently the good man in St. Paul's Churchyard had worked for my delight. The excellent Dr. Primrose, sick and penniless at an inn, is succoured by a traveller, who had stopped to take refreshment. "This person was no other than the philanthropic bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, who had written so many little books for children: he called himself their friend, but he was the friend of all mankind. He was no sooner alighted but he

was in haste to be gone, for he was ever on business of the utmost importance, and was at that time actually compiling materials for the history of one Mr. Thomas Trip. I immediately recollected this good-natured man's pimpled face."

In the ordinary course of nature I began to put away childish things, and Mr. Newbery's little books —although my father had a drawer full of them very smartly bound in gilt paper—had lost their old attraction. Priceless now would be this collection, mixed up with horn-books—a single copy of which is one of the rarest relics of the olden time. I would fain set up a theory as to how my father came to have such a store of these curiosities. In the year 1787 he published 'The Microcosm, a periodical work, by Gregory Griffin, of the college of Eton.' Of this production of school-boys, which was destined to shed a new lustre upon public school education, George Canning was the editor, and the writer of some of its most brilliant papers. Number 30 is written in that style of mock gravity which took in dull people and pleased lively ones, whether exhibited by Canning in 'The Microcosm,' or in 'The Anti-Jacobin.' The Essayist had promised his fellow citizens that he would point out a set of books to their observation, from the perusal of which, if substituted in the place of novels, they might derive equal advantage and entertainment. Without dwelling upon the prefatory matter, which is a little too long, I pass on to the books which the young wit and scholar so earnestly recommends. "These are no other than the instructive and entertaining

histories of Mr. Thomas Thumb, Mr. John Hickathrift, and sundry other celebrated worthies, a true and faithful account of whose adventures and achievements may be had by the curious and public in general, price twopence, gilt, at Mr. Newbery's, St. Paul's Churchyard, and at some other gentleman's, whose name I do not now recollect, the Bouncing B, Shoe Lane." Mr. Gregory Griffin would not condescend to compare Mr. Newbery's books with those precious farragoes, in the room of which he intends introducing them to his fellow citizens. In the heroes of the two to which he has alluded, he finds a very strong resemblance to those who are immortalised in Homeric song. Hickathrift may be compared with Achilles, Thumb with Ulysses. But the histories of the modern worthies unite the great and sublime of Epic grandeur with the little and the low of common life, and temper the glaring colours of the marvellous and terrible with the softer shades of the domestic and familiar. The picture which Homer, in the tenth book of the Iliad, draws of Agamemnon, rising sleepless, and putting on his sandals, is not so interesting as the sketch of the night preceding that in which Tom Thumb and his brother were to be purposely lost in the wood. "Now it was nine o'clock, and all the children, after eating a piece of bread and butter, were put to bed, but little Tom did not eat his, but put it in his pocket; and now all the children were fast asleep in their beds, but little Tom could not sleep for thinking of what he had heard the night before, so he got up and put on his shoes and stockings." The form of the Ogre is painted

in a style infinitely beyond the Polypheme of Homer, to say nothing of the terrible poetic imagery of *fee, faw, fum*. "It would be an endless task," says Mr. Griffin, "to point out every latent beauty, every unnoticed elegance with which these productions are interspersed. . . . I shall hasten to inform my fellow citizens that, in compliance with my advice, my bookseller proposes very soon substituting, in the room of his present catalogue, a list of all the productions of this kind which can be procured either at Mr. Newbery's or the Bouncing B." This is admirable fooling, but it serves my purpose, as introducing a glance at the children's books of the last century.

Goldsmith, in 1766, described the good-natured, pimpled-faced bookseller as one "who had written so many little books for children." Chalmers, in his preface to the 'Idler,' regards Mr. Newbery as "the reputed author of many little books for Masters and Misses." Mr. John Nichols brings forward other candidates for the honour of projecting and writing "The Liliputian histories of 'Goody Two Shoes,' 'Giles Gingerbread,' 'Tommy Trip,' etc., etc." "It is not generally known," he says, "that to Mr. Griffith Jones, and a brother of his, Mr. Giles Jones, in conjunction with Mr. John Newbery, the public are indebted for the origin of those numerous and popular little books for the amusement and instruction of children, which have been ever since received with universal approbation." Alas! for the uncertainty of posthumous fame. Although Mr. Griffith Jones was editor of 'The London Chronicle,' 'The

Daily Advertiser,' and 'The Public Ledger,' his good deeds are written in water. The little books that were once "received with universal approbation," have passed out of the popular knowledge. Their memories have chiefly survived in Christmas pantomimes. In this shape their pathos and their fun, their romantic adventures, and their domestic incidents, have long been embalmed. Fielding's 'Tom Thumb,' and Henry Brooke's 'Jack The Giant Queller,' had higher pretensions than those of stage display; but 'Cinderella,' the grand Spectacle produced at Drury Lane in 1804, and 'Mother Goose,' first acted at Covent Garden in 1806, carried the fame of Mr. Newbery's heroes and heroines to a height rarely attained by any succeeding attempts in the same direction. It might be a curious piece of literary inquiry to trace the origin of these infantine fictions into the early days of the minstrels, who, to use the prosaic language of Ritson, "made it their business to wander up and down the country chanting romances, and singing songs and ballads to the harp, fiddle, or more humble and less artificial instruments." At the exact period when Newbery was publishing his little books, Percy produced his 'Reliques of English Poetry.' Here we find the poetical romance of 'Valentine and Ursine.' But the editor informs us that "the old story-book of Valentine and Orson (which suggested the plan of this tale, but it is not strictly followed in it) was originally a translation from the French, being one of their earliest attempts at romance." Thomas Evans, one of the most intelligent of the booksellers,

published his first collection of old ballads in 1777. Here is printed a famous ballad of Tom Thumb, but its incidents are very different from those in Mr. Newbery's volume. If he and his learned coadjutors condescended at all to borrow, they would have found materials in many productions such as the old story-books to which Percy refers. In Newbery's time there was a considerable bookseller, Sir James Hodges, Knight, who, carrying on his business at the sign of "The Looking-glass," on London Bridge, was a great dealer in *chap-books*. Vulgar as these might seem in the days of King George the Second—common wares carried about by *chapmen*—they were the choicest reading in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Captain Cox, of Coventry, celebrated by Robert Laneham as possessing many goodly monuments, both in prose and poetry, "fair wrapt up in parchment, and bound with a whipcord," is duly honoured, for "great oversight hath he in matters of story." Dr. Dibdin, in extracting the passage in which Queen Elizabeth's Master of the Ceremonies gives the names of Captain Cox's choice books, goes into extasies such as a collector only can feel. "The late Duke of Roxburgh, of never-dying bibliomaniacal celebrity, would have parted with half the insignia of his Order of the Garter to have obtained clean original copies of these fascinating effusions." When John Newbery was travelling about "on business of the utmost importance," he would have found copies in every country town, but such were not the most valued original copies. Valued, indeed, now are even the reprints of the last century, which the worthy

bookseller might have obtained in High Street, Coventry, where "Shopkeepers and Travellers may at all Times be supplied, on the most reasonable Terms, with all kinds of Histories, Godly and other Patters, Children's Books, Valentine-Writers, Old Ballads, Slip Songs, Carols, &c., &c., at J. Turner's, Printer." I have the good fortune to possess a volume of these dainties, chiefly from Mr. Turner's press, presented to me by a valued friend, whose inscription on the fly-leaf I am tempted to copy: "Penny Magazines. Bought at Mr. Halliwell's sale by A. De Morgan, and by him presented to Chas. Knight, who spoiled the sale of them, and deserves to be smothered under them." Superior as is the literary character of Mr. Newbery's little books to these relics of the old penny knowledge, I am constrained to say that there is not the slightest difference in the character of the wood-cuts. The penny chap-books of Coventry, and the three-penny and sixpenny volumes bound in gilt paper, that issued from No. 65, in St. Paul's Churchyard, sufficiently indicate the same epoch of art applied to book illustration. The elaborate engravings in the history of Fortunatus in my volume, and the smaller representations of costume and architecture in the renowned history of Mrs. Margaret Two Shoes, are decidedly of the time of the Second George. Fortunatus, with his three-cornered Wishing-Hat on his head, and his ample wig, is a very ugly copy of a very ugly sign, that dwells in my remembrance—the Duke's Head, at Windsor—being the faithful representation of that most amiable hero, Duke William of Cumberland. "Who," says Mr. Newbery,

"does not know Lady Ducklington, or who does not know that she was buried at this church?" Certainly such a parish church as we find depicted at page 43, and the barn at page 53, are decidedly characteristic of the early Georgian era. In the art of wood-cutting there was room for improvement.

There is nothing more remarkable in Mr. Newbery's little books than the originality of their style. There have been attempts to approach its simplicity —its homeliness. Great authors have tried their hands at imitating its clever adaptation to the childish intellect, but they have failed. Never was failure more complete than that of Sir Walter Scott. He sets about writing his 'Tales of a Grandfather' for a little boy of five years old. He gets on famously with 'The Story of Macbeth.' "Now there lived at this time three old women in the town of Forres, whom people looked upon as witches, and supposed they could tell what was to come to pass. Nobody would believe such follies now-a-days, except low and ignorant creatures, such as those who consult gipsies in order to have their fortunes told; but in those early times the people were much more ignorant, and even great men like Macbeth believed that such persons as the witches of Forres could tell what was to come to pass afterwards, and listened to the nonsense they told them, as if the old women had really been prophetesses. The old women saw that they were respected and feared, so that they were tempted to impose upon people by pretending to tell what was to happen to them; and they got presents for doing so." But he very soon pitches in

another key, as he acknowledges in his Preface. "The compiler may here mention that, after commencing his task in a manner obvious to the most limited capacity, of which the tale of Macbeth is an example, he was led to take a different view of the subject, by finding that a style considerably more elevated was *more interesting to his juvenile reader*. There is no harm, but, on the contrary, there is benefit in presenting a child with ideas somewhat beyond his easy and immediate comprehension. The difficulties thus offered, if not too great or too frequent, stimulate curiosity and encourage exertion." This is false logic, and scarcely hides the real truth that Sir Walter could not sustain the difficult task of writing in the way of his prototypes, Mr. Newbery and Mr. Griffith Jones. They could carry the union of puerility and instruction through many volumes. So Sir Walter turned his intended pretty stories into an 'Abridged History of Scotland, for the use of young persons.' He abandoned the Cinderella and Tom Thumb style after he had written a very few pages. The child's play was work too hard for him.

A century has passed away since John Newbery flourished, but I rejoice to believe that his lore for the nursery has not been altogether superseded by the science of the school-room. I presume that the smart nurse of modern days—the chief business of whose life seems to be to obstruct the footway with her perambulator—would scorn to have her memory burdened with such stories as I was wont to listen to

with a delight that sensible narratives could never afford me. Perhaps there are few of the successors of my "Pegotty" who could repeat the wonderful story of the old woman with the crooked sixpence, who went to market to buy a little pig, and could not get it home, for piggy would not go over the stile. But though the traditions of the ancient sisterhood, who once sat by the cradle in mob cap and checked apron, may be now despised, they cannot die out, for the printer and the engraver, with all the modern improvements of their arts, have secured for them a longer life than even Mr. Newbery might have anticipated. I have the catalogue before me of the Original Juvenile Library at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard. Nichols records that "Mr. Newbery was the first of the profession who introduced the regular system of a juvenile library." Here, in the same spot where it first grew, this fruitful tree still flourishes. It has had various careful guardians during that long period, whose business has been to prune, and water, and engraft; and to plant slips and seedlings over a much wider area. The catalogue issued in 1865 by "Griffiths and Farran, successors to Newbery and Harris," has on its title page a woodcut which has probably adorned a long series of catalogues. It represents three figures—"Goldsmith introduced to Newbery by Dr. Johnson."

But between the Juvenile Library of 1765 and of 1865 there were changes in literary taste, and necessarily in books for the young, which multiplied writers and booksellers in this department. For

myself, I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Thomas Day who gave me 'Little Jack' and 'Sandford and Merton;' nor should I forget Henry Brooke with his wealth of stories in the 'Fool of Quality.' But a new source of attraction was to arise in a very few years after Mr. Newbery had done his work. There were two books, the companions of my childhood, which I presume it would be difficult to find in any juvenile collection now. And yet they were the precursors of a revolution in Art. 'The Progress of Man and Society,' of which Dr. Trusler was the compiler, was published in 1791; and 'The Looking-glass of the Mind' in 1796. The cuts for these two books were drawn and engraved by Thomas Bewick.

There were two booksellers of the name of Newbery living at the same period, and each honourably connected with Goldsmith. John, of St. Paul's Churchyard, published the 'Traveller,' in 1765. Francis, his nephew, of Paternoster Row, published 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' in 1766. Boswell has given "authentically, from Johnson's own exact narration," the history of the sale of this novel to Francis Newbery—"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea,

and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merits; told the landlady I should soon return; and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Although Francis Newbery eventually succeeded to the business of his uncle in St. Paul's Churchyard, there appears to have been an intermediate proprietor of the Original Juvenile Library, whom Mr. John Nichols simply mentions as bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, who died in 1788. Upon an edition of 'Little Goody Two-Shoes,' I find this imprint; "Printed for T. Carnan, successor to Mr. J. Newbery." The reputation of Thomas Carnan is associated with more durable records than the obituary of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' He lives in the eloquence of Erskine. John Newbery died in 1767; and soon after Carnan entered upon the business in St. Paul's Churchyard, he became possessed with a very sensible notion that the Stationers' Company had no legal title to their monopoly of Almanacs. He began, therefore, to publish almanacs of his own. The Company, after having anathematised him as the base publisher of "counterfeit almanacs," sent him to prison on a summary process, as regularly as

he issued his annual commodities. A friend of his family told me, some forty years ago, that this incorrigible old bookseller always at this season kept a clean shirt in his pocket, that he might make a decent appearance before the magistrate and the keeper of Newgate. But Carnan persevered, till the judges of the Court of Common Pleas decided against the validity of the patent, and an injunction which had been obtained in the Exchequer was immediately dissolved. The Stationers' Company then induced Lord North to bring a Bill into Parliament to revest in them the monopoly that had been declared illegal. In 1779 Erskine, in a speech which remains as one of the great triumphs of his oratory, procured the rejection of this Bill by a large majority. "What," some one of my readers may say, "has this digression to do with the works of Goldsmith?" Carnan, who had become the proprietor of 'The Traveller,' published by John Newbery, opposed the re-publication of Goldsmith's poems in the booksellers' edition of 1779. He was at issue with the leaders of the trade. "It is much to be regretted," says Mr. Cunningham, in his preface to Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets,' "that the petty interest of a bookseller named Carnan should have excluded Goldsmith from the number of his Lives." There was evidently something more than "petty interest," which set Carnan in direct opposition to the great body of his fellows. The great question was in hot dispute in 1777. The Stationers had the ear of the Prime Minister; but Carnan was in con-

fidential intercourse with Erskine. We shall not see his shadow amongst the forty booksellers who met at the Chapter Coffee-house to resist "an invasion of their literary preserves by the publication at Edinburgh of an edition of The British Poets, from Chaucer to Churchill."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHAPTER COFFEE-HOUSE.

TWO Undergraduates of Oxford, George Colman and Bonnel Thornton, commenced their literary career in 1754, with the periodical paper, 'The Connoisseur.' The experience of these youths, who had been the Westminster schoolfellows of Cowper, Lloyd, and Churchill, scarcely justified them in assuming the dignity of "Mr. Town, Critic and Censor-General." Yet their liveliness contrasted agreeably with the solemnity of the 'Rambler,' which had come to a close in 1752; nor were they ignoble rivals of Hawkesworth, in his 'Adventurer,' commenced in that year. Colman and Thornton were the Beaumont and Fletcher of essayists, and in their concluding number, they declared that almost every single paper was the joint production of both. They had both looked upon London with the quick observation of youth, and were probably better qualified to describe some of its lighter aspects than those who desired "to point a moral" in the office of "Critic and Censor-General." They certainly have not described at hap-hazard the famous coffee-house in Paternoster Row, where booksellers "most do congregate." Alas! I am using a wrong tense; the

Chapter gradually fell into decay, and within a few years has ceased to exist. But in connection with the *Old* Booksellers, its memory will survive as long as that of the Mermaid or the Devil Tavern. Thus writes Mr. Town: "My publisher would not forgive me, was I to leave the neighbourhood without taking notice of the Chapter coffee-house, which is frequented by those encouragers of literature, and (as they are styled by an eminent critic) 'not the worst judges of merit, the booksellers.' The conversation here naturally turns upon the newest publications; but their criticisms are somewhat singular. When they say a good book, they do not mean to praise the style or sentiment, but the quick and extensive sale of it. That book, in the phrase of the Conger, is best which sells most; and if the demand for Quarles should be greater than for Pope, he would have the highest place on the rubric-post. There are also many parts of every work liable to their remarks, which fall not within the notice of less accurate observers. A few nights ago, I saw one of these gentlemen take up a sermon, and after seeming to peruse it for some time with great attention, he declared 'it was very good English.' The reader will judge whether I was most surprised or diverted, when I discovered that he was not commending the purity and elegance of the diction, but the beauty of the type, which, it seems, is known among the printers by that appellation. We must not, however, think the members of the Conger strangers to the deeper parts of literature; for as carpenters, smiths, masons, and all mechanics smell of the trade they

labour at, booksellers take a peculiar turn from their connexions with books and authors. The character of the bookseller is commonly formed on the writers in his service. Thus one is a politician, or a deist; another affects humour, or aims at turns of wit and repartee; while a third perhaps is grave, moral, and sententious."

The members of "The Conger" were a select band, who, in the middle of the last century, had a common interest in the copyright of certain books, whether copyright by law or by usage. It appears that in 1719 five booksellers united themselves under the name of the Printing Conger. In 1736, this limited partnership still went on, with the addition of new names. In that year, a correspondent of Mr. Bowyer speaks of the Society for Encouraging Learning as "a downright trading society, a mere Conger;" adding, "Forgive me if I misspell so mysterious a word." About the same period, a second partnership of the same kind was formed, calling themselves the New Conger. Mr. Nichols, who records these particulars, says, "the term *Conger* was supposed to have been at first applied to them invidiously, alluding to the *Conger Eel*, which is said to swallow the smaller fry; or it may possibly have been taken from *Congeries*." Whether the "smaller fry" were the minnows of bookselling or of authorship, Mr. Nichols does not explain. The Conger, new and old, died out. The practice of diminishing the individual risk of publication gradually extended in the division of a book into shares, varying in amount, each partner being liable for his portion of the cost. The arrangements

of the shareholders were generally made at the Chapter coffee-house, and thus, in process of time, the publications of associated booksellers came to be called Chapter books. The name is now almost obsolete. That system of publication has nearly come to an end. The co-operative system of bookselling, in which there was really a great deal of good, mixed however with some evil, has yielded to a system of the keenest competition. It was at its height in the year 1777, when there was a great day at the Chapter. Wordsworth's pastoral scene in the Lake country lingers in my memory, and suggests a town parallel:—

> "The green field sleeps in the sun:
> * * * *
> The cattle are grazing,
> Their heads never raising;
> There are forty feeding like one!"

Edward Dilly, a leading spirit in the trade, has described, in a letter to Boswell, how "a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London." The green pasture upon which the forty came to feed, "like one," was "an elegant and accurate edition of all the English poets."

The shadows of some of the finest and fattest of the herd rise up before me. Mr. EDWARD DILLY claims precedence as the historiographer of the day. He says, "The first cause that gave rise to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of 'The Poets,' printing by the Martins, at Edinburgh, and to be sold by Bell in London. * * *

Accordingly, a select number of the most respectable booksellers met on the occasion, and, on consulting together, agreed that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together, and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business." Mr. Dilly, I may imagine, duly expatiated at the meeting—as he set forth to Mr. Boswell—how "the little trifling edition" was not only printed in unreadable type, and was very inaccurate, but was an invasion of "what we call our literary property." This bookseller occupies too large a space in the scanty annals of the trade to be abruptly dismissed. He is the great dinner-giver of the latter time of Dr. Johnson.

Coleridge has a wicked Note on that profane poem, 'The Devil's Thoughts,' which I have indiscreetly quoted, wherein he says that "a young retailer in the hosiery line, on hearing a description of the net profits, dinner parties, country houses, &c., of the trade, exclaimed, 'Ay! that's what I call Life, now.'" (I will not interrupt my narrative to enquire whether this young hosier were not Richard Phillips, or Philip Richards, of Leicester, who, having seen something of the Life of the trade in Leicester gaol for selling Paine's 'Rights of Man,' came to London, and in due time, "on the tree of Life sat like a cormorant.") The young hosier's notion of Life was fully carried out by Edward and Charles Dilly. Boswell is ever full of "my worthy booksellers and friends, Messrs. Dilly, in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir

Joshua Reynolds." Their parties included men of all creeds, political and religious. They were Non-conformists; but in the days before the French Revolution difference of opinion did not necessarily produce hatred; and thus, according to Mr. Nichols, "here Johnson and Wilkes forgot the animosities of Whig and Tory; here High Church Divines and pillars of the Meeting-house relinquished their polemics, and enjoyed uninterrupted conviviality." These pleasant meetings seem to have been fatal, in 1779, to the elder brother, Edward, who "literally talked himself to death." With this faculty of eloquence, he probably harangued a good deal when he met the forty in 1777. How, when Dr. Johnson's name was proposed as the fittest person to write "a concise account of the life of each author," would he expatiate upon the manifold opportunities he had enjoyed of being well acquainted with that great man's powers! "Yes, gentlemen, he often dines with my brother and myself. He has too great a mind to be particular as to the company he meets. It is not a year ago—yes, it is sixteen months ago—since he sat by the side of Mr. Wilkes at our table, and they were quite frank and easy. Mr. Wilkes told a story about—(*Chair, chair*). I beg pardon. The business in hand was—" *Chairman:* "What poet we should begin with? Mr. Davies thinks we should include some of the great writers of the time of Queen Elizabeth. (*No, no,* from several voices).

Mr. DAVIES (commonly known as Tom Davies) is as famous for his tea-parties as Edward and Charles Dilly for their dinners. Churchill, it is said, drove

him from his position as an actor in Garrick's company by his killing satire, of which the pit too well remembered the line—

"He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone."

Under this calamity he found a refuge in his shop in Russell-street, Covent Garden. Dr. John Campbell, the author of a Political Survey of Britain, describes him as "not a bookseller, but a gentleman dealing in books." Johnson said he was "learned enough for a clergyman." In his early career as a bookseller he was not successful. The stage, provincial and metropolitan, then furnished a living for himself and "his pretty wife." When Churchill had incited the pit to hiss his mouthing, he returned to the bosom of "the trade," and honestly earned a literary reputation as the author of the 'Life of Garrick' and of 'Dramatic Miscellanies.' His was probably an exceptional case, for he made money by the publication of his own writings. Boswell has a solemn record of a great event in his London experience, which introduces us in 1763 to the domestic life of Russell-street, Covent Garden. "On Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop, and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing toward us, he announced his awful approach to me somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my lord, it comes!'" It would be tedious to recount many of these tea-drinkings in the

back-parlour with the glass-door, at which Johnson is a prominent figure. He was generally talkative, but frequently abstracted, and sometimes uttered pious ejaculations. Boswell records an instance of these singularities: "His friend, Mr. Thomas Davies, of whom Churchill says—

'That Davies hath a very pretty wife,'

when Dr. Johnson muttered, 'Lead us not into temptation,' used with waggish and gallant humour to whisper to Mrs. Davies, 'You, my dear, are the cause of this.'" Their friendly intercourse continued to the end of Johnson's life. But I am wandering from the business of the Chapter coffee-house. Mr. Davies observed that great as was the admiration of some scholars for Chaucer, he understood that there was an opinion amongst his professional brethren that it would not be wise to introduce his writings into a popular edition of the poets. (*Right, right,* from many voices.) He thought, however, that Spenser— (*No, no*). He should like to see in the collection the Poems of Sir John Davies and the Pastorals of William Browne, which he had himself reprinted a few years ago. (*And much you got by them,* cried out a stickler for the moderns.) Mr. Davies was beaten, and he sat down.

At the period of this great day at the Chapter there was a monthly dining club, held at the Shakspeare Tavern, composed exclusively of booksellers. Mr. John Nichols, a member of this club, has supplied some interesting details of the shining lights of this society. He looks back, in 1806, upon thirty-five years of past enjoyment, "when congenial spirits,

warmed, not heated, with the genuine juice of the grape, have unreservedly poured out their whole souls in Attic wit and repartee." This, however, was an association not wholly devoted to the enjoyment of the genuine juice of the grape, nor to the pouring forth of Attic wit and repartee. Serious projects of business were here discussed. "Here," says Mr. Nichols, "first were suggested the ideas which led to the publication of Dr. Johnson's invaluable Lives of the most eminent English Poets." For this reason the members of the booksellers' club claim precedence, as I continue to evoke the shadows of the trade as they congregated in 1777. Tom Davies—whose lively sallies of pleasantry show him to have been something more than a "pompous little Bibliopole," as he has been termed in later days—has already passed over my scene. Thomas Cadell and James Dodsley have appeared in the preceding pages. Of the remaining members of the booksellers' club, celebrated by Mr. Nichols, let me first introduce one who had the honour of being eulogised by Gibbon.

PETER ELMSLEY presented himself to the great historian in two characters—the sagacious adviser and the entertaining companion. To Mr. Deyverdun Gibbon writes: "Je trouve dans le Libraire Elmsley un conseiller sage, instruit, et discret." In another letter we find: "I was proud and happy if I could prevail on Elmsley to enliven the dullness of the evening." The author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' gives his testimony to the merits of Mr. Elmsley, quoting Gibbon's opinion, and adding that of Mr. Jacob Bryant, who speaks of this honoured bookseller

of the Strand as one "whose zeal for his author can never be sufficiently commended." Elmsley, whose principal business was in foreign books, was a great linguist, with an amount of general knowledge that fitted him for conversation and correspondence, upon a familiar and equal footing, with the most illustrious and accomplished of his day. Though he was a member of the club at which the idea of the booksellers' edition of the Poets originated, he was too well informed to have acquiesced in the narrow principles which determined that selection. His name does not appear amongst the shareholders of the first edition, although it is found in the second edition, when the original collection was somewhat enlarged. Mr. Dilly, in his letter to Boswell, says that the London booksellers had undertaken to print "an elegant and accurate edition of all the English Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time." This intention was abandoned. The reason why the great poets before Cowley are not to be found in a collection which professed to be a complete body of English poetry, may be inferred from another passage in Mr. Dilly's letter: "My brother will give you a list of the poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them; the proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence." The exclusive copyright debarred the printers of the Apollo press, Edinburgh, from inserting Young, Mallet, Akenside, and Gray, which duly appeared in the London collection. It was the right by usage of

"what we call our literary property" which perpetuated the rubbish of Dorset, Stepney, Walsh, Duke, Sprat, and the other luminaries of the Augustan age, which Martin and Bell had sense enough to cast aside. With a body of English poetry limited to fifty-three volumes, and thus encumbered, what chance was there that Chaucer, Surrey, Wyat, Gascoigne, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Davies, Donne, Carew, Drummond, Browne, Habington, Lovelace—to name a few of the elder classics—should not be crowded out. Johnson was not the man to put these matters right: he was indignant that the London Booksellers' Collection should be called *his*. He added to their list Blackmore, Pomfret, Yalden, and Watts. Southey sums up the matter in a few words, declaring that what the world before the flood is to historians, the poets before the Restoration were to Johnson.

It is not easy to believe that, except under some remarkable delusions as to the public taste, the more intelligent of the booksellers could have been perfectly satisfied with the selection for their edition of the poets. They must have anticipated the censure with which, after a very little time, their undertaking was received by a much larger number of readers than the enthusiastic admirers of our old poetry. Within seven years of the appearance of the Booksellers' Collection, Mr. Cadell published two very remarkable little volumes, 'Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, by Henry Headley, A.B.' He does not hesitate to sanction by his *imprimatur* the strong terms in which this accomplished writer

speaks of the voluminous Chapter-book:—"A most unworthy rabble have gained a passport to the Temple of Fame, much after the following ridiculous predicament, so well described on a very different occasion by Mr. Burke, whose words we may literally apply. 'He put together a piece of joinery so closely indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tessellated pavement, without cement—here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white—that it was a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on; the colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board, stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, 'Sir, your name!'" Amongst those, I think, who would have been foremost to object, was THOMAS EVANS (mentioned in the preceding chapter). In the very year of the coffee-house meeting, he had edited and published his 'Old Ballads, collected from rare Copies and MSS.' His son, in his advertisement to a new edition, says:—"The repeated perusal of Percy's 'Reliques of Ancient Poetry' first suggested to the late editor the idea of the present work. The genius and taste which pervade that beautiful compilation fascinated his attention and excited his curiosity; he regretted that the Doctor had confined his work to the scanty limits of three volumes, and he resolved to collect the scattered ballads, which were yet to be found dispersed through various libraries, in hopes they might furnish the same entertainment to others that he had himself derived from them." Mr. John

Forster has pointed out that the Thomas Evans who, in 1772, for publishing a libel was beaten by Goldsmith, and returned the blow with interest, "must not be confounded with a worthy bookseller of the same name, who first collected Goldsmith's writings." Mr. Evans, of Pall Mall, whose Shadow I present, had, says Mr. Nichols, "naturally a taste and a love for literature; and, as far as prudence would permit, endeavoured to render his private propensity the source of public advantage and public ornament."

If Thomas Evans had gained a reputation amongst the judicious few by the republication of some writers that had fallen into neglect, THOMAS PAYNE, of the Mews-gate, was the medium, for forty years, of making all books, new and old, English and foreign, extensively known by the circulation of his annual catalogues. His little shop acquired the name of a Literary Coffee-house; for there, rummaging over his shelves, or glancing at the books upon his counters, were to be found a succession of scholars always eager to purchase at the very moderate prices at which "honest Tom Payne" marked his books. Mathias (if he, indeed, be the author of the 'Pursuits of Literature') describes him as "that *Trypho emeritus*, Mr. Thomas Payne, one of the honestest men living, to whom, as a bookseller, learning is under considerable obligations." The character which Roger North gives of Robert Scot of Little Britain may be applied to Thomas Payne of the Mews-gate. "He was not only an expert bookseller, but a very conscientious, good man." I

cannot continue the quotation as applied to Mr. Payne: "When he threw up his trade, Europe had no small loss of him." He had a worthy successor in his eldest son, to whom he resigned his business in 1790. Thomas Payne of Pall Mall carried the reputation of his father into a grander place of business than the original little shop in the shape of an L.

The dynasty of LONGMAN, in Paternoster Row, seems to have endured for almost as many generations as the House of Brunswick. The surname is to be found on the same title-pages as the names of Jacob Tonson and Thomas Osborne, and the baptismal name of Thomas has descended in the firm as regularly as that of the four Georges. Nearly a century and a half of uninterrupted prosperity and reputation has crowned the labours of very few mercantile houses. The first Thomas Longman was succeeded by his nephew, whom we have seen honourably associated with Dodsley and Millar in the project of 'Johnson's Dictionary.' It is he of the booksellers' club whose shadow I now trace at the Chapter Coffee-house. Another member of that club was ROBERT BALDWIN, whose name is legion in the annals of bookselling. Whether the Baldwins of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be traced back to the William Bauldwyn, or Baldwin, of the time of Edward VI. and Elizabeth I cannot affirm or deny. If their ancestor were the printer who wrote a metrical version of Solomon's Song, and to whom Thomas Sackville recommended

a completion of his 'Mirrour for Magistrates,' the Robert Baldwin of 1777 might well have been stimulated to contend for the claim of some of the early poets to appear in the Booksellers' Collection, instead of being, as it was,

"The Monument of banish'd Mindes."

I must complete in another chapter my shadows of this parliament of old booksellers.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHAPTER COFFEE-HOUSE (*Concluded*).

JOHN RIVINGTON and Sons hold their state under the Bible and Crown, in St. Paul's Churchyard, as did their predecessor Charles very early in the century. His name is associated, in 1725, with Lindsay's translation of Mason's 'Vindication of the Church of England.' Was the old bookseller incautiously sliding into dissent when he published one of the earliest works of George Whitefield, 'The Nature and Necessity of a New Birth in Christ, a Sermon preached at Bristol, in September, 1737'? The young student of Oxford, who, with his coadjutor Wesley, had, in 1736, to bear with being called Bible-moth and Methodist, had gone forth to preach in the fields to the most ignorant and debased. But Whitefield was not then separated from the Church, in which he had been ordained Deacon by Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester. After the publication, by Rivington, of his earliest printed sermon, he went to America, where he widely diffused the tenets of Methodism. But he still belonged to the English Church, in which he was ordained Priest in 1739.

Foote, in his little comedy of 'The Author,' which appeared in 1757, makes a bookseller say to a candi-

date for publication, "I don't deal in the sermon way now; I lost money by the last I printed, for all 'twas wrote by a Methodist." The printed effusions of Methodism had thus, it would appear, become popular in twenty years. But, by this time, John Rivington sat beneath the Bible and Crown, and how well he flourished under the auspices of orthodoxy may be gathered from the enumeration of his dignities by Mr. Nichols: "He carried on his business, universally esteemed, for more than half a century; and enjoyed the especial patronage of the Clergy, particularly those of the higher order. He was many years Bookseller to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; a Governor of most of the Royal Hospitals; a Member of the Court of Lieutenancy, and of the Common Council; a Director of the Amicable Society in Serjeant's Inn, and of the Union Fire-office; and an ancient Member of the Company of Stationers, of which he was Master in 1775." John Rivington must have been quite clear of the seductive influences of Whitefield and Wesley, when, in 1752, he published 'The Mischiefs of Enthusiasm and Bigotry,' an Assize-sermon by the Rev. Richard Hurd. Yes! Enthusiasm was the word with which the old race of the clergy assailed their supposed enemies, and defended their own rich pluralities after they had given up Jacobitism. The *bête-noire* of half a century was the Methodist. Against the sect did George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, pour out the vials of his satire in 1749. 'The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared,' was a fertile theme for fun. The earnestness which was at first ridiculed came in time to be despised. The respect-

able country clergyman, meddling little with the affairs of his neighbours, kind after his fashion to the poor, but rather opposed to the new notion of Sunday Schools; not given to hard-drinking and fox-hunting as the satirist and caricaturist represented; he nevertheless thought it a duty which he owed to his cloth not to be disturbed in his habitual repose by the rivalry of modern dissent. It was not the old-fashioned Non-conformity, which had nearly died out, but something new which had been engendered in the very seat of orthodoxy, and might be dangerous if it crept into the bosom of the Church. It was not much to be feared, however, he thought, as long as it was Dissent.

The example of George III., which banished profligacy from the Court, had contributed to banish gross and licentious manners from the Church. But apathy had taken the place of indecorum, and it was abundantly manifested in the pulpit oratory. Dr. Campbell (the Irish Dr. Campbell) came to London in 1775. He goes to the Temple Church;—"The sermon was preached by a Master of the Society, a brother to Thurlow, the Attorney-General. The discourse was the most meagre composition (on our Saviour's temptation), and the delivery worse. He stood like Gulliver stuck in the marrow-bone, with the sermon (newspaper-like) in his hand, and without grace or emphasis, he in slow cadence measured it forth. In the evening I strolled to Westminster Abbey, where I (being locked in) was obliged to listen to a discourse still duller, and as ill delivered." By way of contrast, he went on a Good Friday to hear Dr. Dodd, "who is cried up as the

first preacher in London." Dr. Campbell says:—"He reads better than he preaches; for in the pulpit he leans too much upon his notes, his eyes are seldom off them, yet he uses the action of an extempore delivery, which makes a jarring jumble. His manner is infinitely superior to his matter, which was a poor and unsuccessful attempt upon the passions." Dodd had borrowed some of the weapons of the Methodists to do battle against unbelief and vice, but he could not wield them. He was a mere actor—a sham. Goldsmith has an essay, full of good sense, 'On the English Clergy and Popular Preachers.' Having noticed the discourses of those who, "fearing to out-do their duty, leave it half done," he says:—"Impressed with a sense of the truths he is about to deliver, a preacher disregards the applause or the contempt of his audience, and he insensibly assumes a just and manly sincerity. With this talent alone we see what crowds are drawn around enthusiasts, even destitute of common sense; what numbers converted to Christianity! Folly may sometimes set an example for wisdom to practise, and our regular divines may borrow instruction from even Methodists."

But something more embarrassing than the contests between orthodoxy and dissent was arising before the close of the century, to disturb the repose of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and their respectable booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard. Wilberforce and Hannah More and the Clapham sect had succeeded in making a portion of the Clergy "Evangelical." Sir James Stephen has shown how these differed from the orthodox,

"by defining an Orthodox clergyman as one who held in dull and barren formality the very same doctrines which the Evangelical held in cordial prolific vitality." This distinction must have been a source of great embarrassment to the worthy booksellers of St. Paul's Churchyard, for when the Church became divided into High and Low, half of their old customers went over to a rival shop in Piccadilly. Up to this evil time the Rivingtons had half a century of prosperity. The country clergyman invariably went to the Bible and Crown for additions to his library. He took thither his sermon to be printed at his own cost; and if, after a year or two, he found that the balance of the account was greatly against him, he did not much repine, for the judicious advice of the Orthodox house had prevented him printing as many copies as there were parishes in England.

An important announcement is made from the Chair at the Chapter. Although an obstinate individual, who shall be nameless, has refused his consent that the Poems of Goldsmith shall be inserted in the Collection (*Shame! Shame!*), difficulties have been overcome as to the insertion of all the poetical works of Gray. (*Applause*). All eyes are directed towards Mr. JOHN MURRAY. This gentleman has an evident struggle with his feelings; but he succeeds in suppressing his desire to unburthen his mind. What was the cause of this slight excitement may be collected from a brief colloquy, in 1778, recorded by Boswell: "Somebody mentioned the Reverend Mr. Mason's prosecution of Mr. Murray, the bookseller, for having inserted in a collection of 'Gray's Poems'

only fifty lines, of which Mr. Mason had still the exclusive property under the statute of Queen Anne; and that Mr. Mason had persevered, notwithstanding his being requested to name his own terms of compensation. Johnson signified his displeasure at Mr. Mason's conduct very strongly; but added, by way of showing that he was not surprised at it, 'Mason's a Whig.' Mrs. Knowles (not hearing distinctly), 'What! a prig, Sir?' JOHNSON, 'Worse, Madam; a Whig! But he is both!'" The feud between Whiggery and the House of Murray might thus have had a remote origin.

The gradual rise of a great monarchy out of a petty principality, has other examples than that of the House of Brandenburg. The sovereigns of the bookselling world have, in this same way, had small beginnings. I have in my portfolio a shop card of a beginner in 1768, at the old sign of the Ship.

JOHN MURRAY (successor to Mr. Sandby),

Bookseller and Stationer,

At No. 32, over-against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street,

London.

Sells all new Books and Publications, Fitts up Public or Private Libraries in the neatest manner with Books of the choicest Editions, the best Print, and the richest Bindings.

Also,

Executes East India or foreign Commissions by an assortment of Books and Stationery suited to the Market or Purpose for which it is destined: all at the most reasonable rates.

The name of the first John Murray is honourably associated with that of William Falconer, the author of 'The Shipwreck.' The bookseller had been an officer of marines; the poet had been a common sailor. They were both natives of Scotland. The sailor gradually secured friends who recognised his genius, and encouraged his desire to attain some literary distinction. But he continued to bear the hardships of a seaman's life. In 1762, he published 'The Shipwreck; a Poem, in three Cantos. By a Sailor.' How the friendship between Falconer and Murray was originally formed, it is scarcely necessary to enquire. That it was something warmer than a common intimacy may be more than conjecture. Murray was negotiating for the purchase of the business of Mr. Sandby, which had been long established in the Trade, retaining a good many old customers; and he was to be ushered into public notice by the publication of new editions of Lord Lyttelton's 'Dialogues,' and of his 'History.' Although he has little reason to doubt of success by himself, he offers "Dear Will" to enter into company with him. The conclusion is characteristic of that honest spirit of self-reliance which has enabled the commanders of the old "Ship", to avail themselves of favouring gales, and to bear up against sudden squalls, for nearly a century:—"If you entertain a notion that the conjunction will suit you, advise me, and you shall be assumed upon equal terms; for I write to you before the affair is finally settled; not that I shall refuse it if you don't concur (for I am determined on the trial by myself); but that I think it will still turn out better were we joined; and this

consideration alone prompts me to write to you. Many blockheads in the trade are making fortunes; and did we not succeed as well as they, I think it must be imputed only to ourselves." Falconer, who had been promoted to a pursership in 1764, seems to have preferred the prospects of his profession. He embarked at the end of 1769 on board the "Aurora" frigate, bound for India, and was no more heard of.

The last of the booksellers of Little Britain was Edward Ballard, who succeeded his father, Samuel, and died in 1796, at the age of eighty-eight, in the same house in which he was born. There was one present at the Chapter coffee-house, in 1777, who lived to the age of ninety-three. THOMAS BECKET was born in 1720. He was one of the assistants of Andrew Millar; left him to become one of the firm of Becket and De Hondt, who published catalogues in 1761, and finally settled himself as a publisher in Pall Mall. He is one of the few booksellers who are mentioned in terms of warm commendation by their authors. Becket was Sterne's first publisher, and the great humourist speaks of him with the same sort of kindly feeling as Goldsmith uses towards Newbery. He saw many revolutions of literary taste during his long acquaintance with authorship. Sterne rushed at once into popularity. After the publication of the first two volumes of 'Tristram Shandy,' Gray speaks of the man, as well as the book, being an object of admiration. "One is invited to dinner where he dines a fortnight beforehand. His portrait is done by Reynolds, and now

engraving. Dodsley gives 700*l.* for a second edition, and for two new volumes not yet written." Johnson, who spoke of him as "the man Sterne," said in 1776, "Nothing odd will do long; 'Tristram Shandy' did not last." But this was one of Johnson's prejudiced judgments. The last volumes of 'Tristram Shandy' were published in 1767. The 'Sentimental Journey' was published in 1768. In that year Sterne died. A short time only had passed over when Johnson disparaged his memory, and Goldsmith said he was "a dull dog." Yorick was probably grown a little out of fashion, when he could no longer set the table in a roar; but he has lasted, and will last, and will even continue to be compared as a painter of character with Shakspere and Cervantes. There was another of Mr. Becket's authors who has passed into obscurity, if not into contempt. No one believes now in the genuineness of Ossian; no one would now hesitate to ask as Boswell asks, "What does Becket mean by the *Originals* of Fingal, and other poems of Ossian, which he advertises to have lain in his shop?" An excellent critic, Professor Craik, has pointed out "that there was some small portion of truth mixed up with Macpherson's deception." He adds: "The Ossianic poetry, after all that has been said about its falsehood of style and substance, as well as of pretension, making it out to be thus a double lie, must still have some qualities wonderfully adapted to allure the popular taste." A furious controversy long raged about Ossian; but ten years after Macpherson's forgeries there came a boy of seventeen, who was also to be vilified as a forger, when he pro-

duced the poems of Thomas Rowley, a monk of the fifteenth century. Seven years before the meeting which I record, there sat down in the place where the forty assembled, Thomas Chatterton, who wrote to his mother: "I am quite familiar at the Chapter coffee-house, and know all the geniuses there." Amongst the geniuses there, did any of the neighbouring booksellers ever come across this boy, with hollow cheeks and piercing eyes, of whom it was afterwards said, "He looked like a spirit?" It was a terrible story, and it is fortunate for the reputation of the Trade that he did not apply in his great need to any one of note amongst the old booksellers, to be cast aside after the fashion of Horace Walpole. One of Mr. Becket's authors of a later date has written of "Bristol's wizard stripling," calling him—

> "The Boy whom once patrician pens adorn'd,
> First meanly flatter'd, then as meanly scorn'd."

Becket, whose long experience would carry him back to the days of the 'Dunciad,' could scarcely expect such a ferment as Pope excited to be produced by the anonymous author of the 'Pursuits of Literature.' But no doubt, as each successive Dialogue was advertised for publication from 1794 to 1797, some enraged dabbler in letters would come to his shop to sneer or to threaten. Mr. Mathias has written very few lines now worth remembering, with the exception perhaps of his felicitous application of the ancient fable to the Shaksperian commentators:—

> "On Avon's banks I heard Actæon mourn,
> By fell Black Letter Dogs in pieces torn."

His notes are overlaid with learning, and his attacks are too much coloured by party feeling. Yet, like all works filled with personalities, this production was successful, and old Mr. Becket had the glory of publishing twelve editions.

Amongst booksellers who decided upon poetry in 1777, there was one present who, as a publisher, was to be the herald of a new era in literature. JOSEPH JOHNSON is honourably connected with the fame of Cowper. To one not familiar with Cowper's Correspondence, it may seem difficult to understand how he should have intrusted his first volume, containing Table-talk, The Progress of Error, Truth, Expostulation, to a Dissenter, whose "literary connexions," says his biographer, J. Aikin, "have lain in great part among the free inquirers both on religious and political topics." Johnson was the publisher of the scientific writings of Priestley and the poetical works of Darwin. The explanation of this difficulty shows that eighty years ago there was a tolerant charity amongst strict religionists—*professors*, as they called themselves.

The Rev. John Newton, the great friend of Cowper, had confided the publication of the Olney Hymns to Joseph Johnson in 1779. Previous to their publication, Newton wrote to his great friend and patron John Thornton, of Clapham, who had urged on the work and borne all risks—"To you I entirely submit the choice of the printer or bookseller. If it was a matter of perfect indifference to you, I have had a thought of my old friend Joseph Johnson, in St. Paul's Churchyard. He printed my 'Narrative' and

volume of 'Sermons;' and though he is not a *professor*, I believe him a man of honour and integrity." Cowper was well satisfied to confide the whole matter of the publication of his first volume of poems to Newton, who took them to his "old friend in St. Paul's Churchyard," and presented them to him without asking any price for the copy.

The volume was thus advertised: "In the press and speedily will be published in one volume octavo, price three shillings, Poems by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esquire." Price three shillings! This was remarkable in Joseph Johnson, for the age of luxurious printing and high prices was beginning:—

> "With wire-wove hot-press'd paper's glossy glare,
> Blind all the wise, and make the stupid stare."

The publisher of Cowper was an exception to his brother publishers of that day, who were addressed in these lines. Aikin says of him, "It is proper to mention that his true regard for the interests of literature rendered him an enemy to that typographical luxury which, joined to the necessary increase of expense in printing, has so much enhanced the price of new books as to be a material obstacle to the indulgence of a laudable and reasonable curiosity by the reading public."

But Johnson was not only "a man of honour and integrity." He rendered those essential services to Cowper as the poems passed through the press which an intelligent publisher may afford to his author without setting up a claim to be a man of letters.

He suggested a few corrections in the first sheets—a bold thing to do by a bookseller to a poet—and Cowper took this interference with as much good sense as good temper. He writes to Newton, July 7, 1781, "I had rather submit to chastisement now than be obliged to undergo it hereafter. If Johnson, therefore, will mark with a marginal Q those lines that he or his object to, I will willingly retouch them, or give a reason for my refusal."

It is pleasant to read how Cowper thought of his publisher as an intelligent critic. On August 25, 1781, he writes to Newton:—"I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me he noted three such, all which I have reduced to better order. In the foregoing sheet, I assented to some of his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be well for authors in general if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement."

In the original edition of the Poems Newton's name appears on the title-page as editor. He wrote a Preface, or Introduction, highly complimentary indeed, but alluding too distinctly to Cowper's malady, and dwelling too exclusively upon the

religious character of the poems. Johnson strongly urged Cowper not to let this preface stand. The candid poet saw the judiciousness of this advice, and wrote thus to the Rev. Mr. Unwin:—"It is possible, after all, that my book may come forth without a preface. Mr. Newton has written (he could, indeed, write no other) a very sensible as well as a very friendly one; and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and, with my consent first obtained, has offered to negotiate that matter with the author. He judges that, though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is really no need of any preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this."

The preface was cancelled. Cowper, in deprecating any offence to Newton, pays another cordial tribute to the merit of Johnson:—"I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher. He marked such lines as did not please him, and, as often as I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are the better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed, I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati who have favoured their works with a

revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him."

The bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard did not, after his first venture with Cowper, attain the cheapness which he desired for his publications by a niggardly payment for authorship. In 1786, the poet writes to Lady Hesketh: "Johnson behaves very handsomely in the affair of my two volumes. He acts with a liberality not often found in persons of his occupation, and to mention it, when occasion calls me to it, is a justice due to him." It would be difficult, amongst old booksellers or modern, to find one of more liberality and judgment than Joseph Johnson. He encouraged Fuseli in his design to paint a 'Milton Gallery,' to be published in imitation of Boydell's 'Shakspeare.' The poems were to be edited by Cowper, but his illness put an end to that project; yet Johnson subscribed, with five other friends of Fuseli, to advance him a sum of money till the paintings were completed. Johnson had to bear the common fate of other right-minded men in a season of political persecution. He was imprisoned nine months in the King's Bench for selling the political works of Gilbert Wakefield. He was enabled to bear his confinement with equanimity; for he rented the Marshal's house, where he used to give dinners to his literary friends, of whom he had a large number of the most distinguished.

Let me say a word of the mischievous spirit—the very Puck of booksellers—who has caused all this commotion in the trade, JOHN BELL, of the Strand.

Leigh Hunt has described him, as he appeared early in the present century; when he published 'Bell's Weekly Messenger:'—"He was a plain man, with a red face, and a nose exaggerated by intemperance; and yet there was something not unpleasing in his countenance, especially when he spoke. He had sparkling black eyes, a good-natured smile, gentlemanly manners, and one of the most agreeable voices I ever heard. He had no acquirements, perhaps not even grammar; but his taste in putting forth a publication, and getting the best artists to adorn it, was new in those times, and may be admired in any."* This remarkable man, as Hunt calls him, was not satisfied with producing his 'British Poets,' to invade "our literary property," but he sent forth his 'British Theatre' to drive out of the market the old octavo editions of single Plays, or the cumbrous collections of the works of dramatic authors, from Dryden and Farquhar to Thomson and Colman. He published 'Shakespear,' also in small pocket volumes. His draughtsmen and engravers were not selected for their cheapness, but for their excellence. His love of innovation was really awful. Nichols (John Bowyer) records that "Mr. Bell, in publishing his 'British Theatre,' first set the fashion of discarding *the long s*." Worst of all, he raised up a series of rivals and imitators, who went upon the same principle of giving the common reader nicely-printed small volumes, with embellishments by first-rate artists. COOK, of Paternoster-row, was one of those who made a fortune

* 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 276.

by this *illegitimate* business. Then came HARRISON, with his 'British Novelists,' in 100 volumes, illustrated by Stothard. I have a series of these charming designs. What wealth of fancy; what fertility of humour; what truth of characterization, do these cheap embellishments present to me! As I turn over my two or three hundred little engravings, the incidents which filled my young mind with wonder, and the people over whose fortunes I once laughed and cried, rise up once more, and Memory takes me again over the old ground which Genius has covered with its imperishable fruits and flowers. Robinson Crusoe is there, leaving the foundered ship, upon his raft; or building his boat, with his faithful Friday assisting in the labour. Peter Wilkins (does any one now read that delightful imitation of Defoe?) is at the door of his lonely cabin, holding a lamp as he gazes upon a woman with wings, lying upon the ground as if dead;—his tender and loving Yonwarkee. Gulliver, in Lilliput, is pegged to the earth, whilst diminutive beings are climbing by ladders up the steep sides of the Man-mountain. Sir Launcelot Greaves goes forth armed *cap-à-pie*, to redress the evils of society; but the modern knight, as delineated by the artist, is not to be compared to the Knight of La Mancha. Motteux's translation of Cervantes, and Stothard's designs, would make me well content to renew my acquaintance with the adventure of the Windmills, and with Sancho, the governor of Barataria; even though Dickens or Thackeray were at hand, to wile away a long winter evening. I pass over the Grandison and the Clarissa (with costumes

slightly modernized as compared with the original plates), to converse as familiarly as of old with Peregrine Pickle, Commodore Trunnion, and Tom Pipes. But more prized even than these worthies are Gil Blas, in the Robber's Cave; and Asmodeus, that marvellous little figure upon crutches, which genius only could have conceived. But whither am I wandering? I would fain linger over the immortal Uncle Toby and the Widow, or weep with the Cook and the Scullion, as Corporal Trim drops his hat upon the ground to point the moral of the story of Le Fevre. But this dallying with pleasant recollections must not be. I must close my portfolio, and say no more about the cheap publishers of popular works eighty years ago, beyond expressing my conviction that they had right notions of Art for the multitude.

NOTE.

The following lists of names are those which appear as the associated publishers of the first and second editions of Johnson's Poets. They furnish a curious record of the ruling sovereigns in the realms of print in 1779, and of the dynastic changes that the lapse of eleven years had produced.

1779. *First Edition,*	1790. *Second Edition.*
C. BATHURST.	
J. BUCKLAND.	J. BUCKLAND.
W. STRAHAN.	
J. RIVINGTON & SONS.	J. RIVINGTON & SONS.
T. DAVIES.	
T. PAYNE.	T. PAYNE & SONS.
L. DAVIS.	S. DAVIS.
W. OWEN.	
B. WHITE.	B. WHITE & SON.
S. CROWDER.	
T. CASLON.	
T. LONGMAN.	T. LONGMAN.
B. LAW.	B. LAW.
E. & C. DILLY.	C. DILLY.
J. DODSLEY.	J. DODSLEY.
H. BALDWIN.	H. BALDWIN.
J. WILKIE.	
J. ROBSON.	J. ROBSON.
J. JOHNSON.	J. JOHNSON.
T. LOWNDES.	WILLIAM LOWNDES.
T. BECKET.	
G. ROBINSON.	G. G. J. & J. ROBINSON.
T. CADELL.	T. CADELL.
W. DAVIS.	
J. NICHOLS.	J. NICHOLS.
J. NEWBERY.	J. NEWBERY.
T. EVANS.	T. EVANS.
J. RIDLEY.	
R. BALDWIN.	R. BALDWIN.

1779. *First Edition.*	1790. *Second Edition.*
G. NICOL.	G. NICOL.
LEIGH & SOTHEBY.	LEIGH & SOTHEBY.
J. BEW.	J. BEW.
N. CONANT.	N. CONANT.
J. MURRAY.	J. MURRAY.
W. FOX.	W. FOX.
J. BOWEN.	H. L. GARDNER.
	P. ELMSLEY.
	J. SEWELL.
	W. GOLDSMITH.
Printed by JOHN NICHOLS.	W. RICHARDSON.
	T. VERNOR.
	W. BENT.
	W. OTRIDGE.
	T. & J. EDGERTON.
	S. HAYES.
	R. FAULDER.
	J. EDWARDS.
	G. & T. WILKIE.
	W. NICOLL.
	OGILVY & SPEER.
	SCATCHARD & WHITAKER.
	C. STALKER.

CHAPTER XIV.

JAMES LACKINGTON.

WHEN I was about ten years old, my father took me to London for a short holiday. He had business to transact with booksellers, of whom I remember Messrs. Robinson, of Paternoster Row, and Mr. Wingrave, of the Strand, for whom he printed the 'French Grammar,' and other works of M. Porny. The dingy warehouses of the great marts of literature did not attract much of my curiosity. But my father had a sight in reserve for me, almost as remarkable as Saint Paul's or Mrs. Salmon's waxwork. I went with him to "The Temple of the Muses." The building was burnt down some years ago, but I have engravings which assist my recollection of what I saw in 1801.

At one of the corners of Finsbury Square, which was built in 1789, there was a block of houses which had been adapted to the purposes of a great shop or warehouse, and presented an imposing frontage. A dome rises from the centre, on the top of which a flag is flying. This royal manifestation (now become common to suburban public-houses), proclaims that this is no ordinary commercial establishment. Over the principal entrance is inscribed, "Cheapest Booksellers in the World." It is the famous shop of

Lackington, Allen, and Co., "where above Half a Million of Volumes are constantly on Sale." We enter the vast area, whose dimensions are to be measured by the assertion that a coach and six might be driven round it. In the centre is an enormous circular counter, within which stand the dispensers of knowledge, ready to wait upon the country clergyman, in his wig and shovel-hat; upon the fine ladies, in feathers and trains; or upon the bookseller's collector, with his dirty bag. If there is any chaffering about the cost of a work, the shopman points to the following inscription: "The lowest price is marked on every Book, and no abatement made on any article." We ascend a broad staircase, which leads to "The Lounging Rooms," and to the first of a series of circular galleries, lighted from the lantern of the dome, which also lights the ground floor. Hundreds, even thousands, of volumes are displayed on the shelves running round their walls. As we mount higher and higher, we find commoner books, in shabbier bindings; but there is still the same order preserved, each book being numbered according to a printed catalogue. This is larger than that of any other bookseller's, and it comes out yearly. The formation of such an establishment as this assumes a remarkable power of organization, as well as a large command of capital. I daresay I wearied my father with questions about this wonderful Mr. Lackington, marvelling how rich he must have been; how learned! He might have answered my enquiries by showing me a very common print with this inscription: "J. Lackington, who a few years since began Book-

selling with five pounds, now sells one hundred thousand volumes yearly; or, the Cobbler turned Bookseller." A year or two later, my desire for information was abundantly satisfied by the perusal of a book entitled 'Memoirs of the forty-five first years of the Life of James Lackington, the present Bookseller in Chiswell Street, Moorfields, London, written by himself, in Forty-seven Letters to a Friend.' This autobiography was originally published in 1791, before "The Temple of the Muses" had been inaugurated. I perhaps did a little injustice to the character of this book in once describing it as "that farrago of sense and absurdity." There is certainly a good deal of nonsense to be found in it, but the real information which it contains, and the curious picture which it presents of the struggles of a young man, almost without the rudiments of knowledge, and miserably poor, to become rich and famous in the annals of bookselling, require a careful and candid exposition.

James Lackington was born at Wellington, in Somersetshire, in 1746. His father, George Lackington, was a journeyman shoemaker. The name, I am informed, is not yet extinct in that town and neighbourhood. His mother was an honest and industrious woman; his father an habitual drunkard. Their poverty was such, under the father's idleness and improvidence, that the mother could not afford to pay two pence a week for the little boy's schooling. His superfluous energy expended itself in all sorts of mischief, till his commercial talent was developed in his employment by a baker, to cry and sell apple

pies about the streets. His first steps in the paths of bookselling are thus described: "During the time that I lived with the baker, my name became so celebrated for selling a large number of pies, puddings, &c., that for several years following, application was made to my father for him to permit me to sell Almanacks a few market days before and after Christmas. In this employ I took great delight, the country people being highly pleased with me, and purchasing a great number of my almanacks, which excited envy in the itinerant venders of Moore, Wing, Poor Robin, &c., to such a degree, that my father often expressed his anxiety lest they should some way or other do me a mischief. But I had not the least concern; for, possessing a light pair of heels, I always kept at a proper distance. O, my friend, little did I imagine at that time, that I should ever excite the same poor mean spirit in many of the booksellers of London and other places."

When Lackington was fourteen years and a half old, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker at Taunton, who was an Anabaptist. He went regularly with the family to the meeting, but he had no idea that he had the least concern in what the minister was preaching about. His master's sons having become converted to Methodism by one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, there were perpetual controversies between the mother and her children. Their arguments and discourses, he says, "made me think they knew many matters of which I was totally ignorant. This created in me a desire for knowledge, that I might know who was right and who was

wrong. But, to my great mortification, I could not read. I knew most of the letters and a few easy words, and I set about learning with all my might." He could soon read the easy parts of he Bible and Wesley's hymns. "I had such good eyes that I often read by the light of the moon, as my master would never permit me to take a candle into my room." I shall not attempt to follow his descriptions of the Methodist organisation, and of his own experiences from the time of his conversion, when about sixteen years of age, to his twenty-first year, when, he says, "I was a sincere enthusiast." One passage presents an accurate picture of what was going on throughout the country: "Instead of hearing the sensible and learned ministers of Taunton, I would often go four, five, or six miles, to some country village, to hear an inspired husbandman, shoemaker, blacksmith, or woolcomber; and frequently in frost and snow have I rose a little after midnight (not knowing what time of night it was) and have wandered about the town until five o'clock, when the preaching began; where I have often heard a sermon preached to not more than ten or a dozen people."

When Lackington had grown into manhood he obtained employment as a journeyman shoemaker at Bristol. At this time he could not write, yet he composed songs, which, being printed, the ballad-singers sang about Bristol streets. He had now acquired a taste for general reading. He and a friend had a little spare money to lay out in books, but they were ashamed to go into the booksellers' shops.

At last they purchased, at a stall in Bristol Fair, Hobbes's translation of Homer. Those who have looked into that most wonderful specimen of the great philosopher's capacity for poetry, will easily conceive that the young shoemakers found crabbed Homer very difficult to read. They got together some few readable books. "What we wanted in judgment in choosing our library we made up in application; so anxious were we to read a great deal that we allowed ourselves but three hours' sleep in the twenty-four." Going to work at Kingsbridge, his master expressed his surprise that he should employ the pens of others to write his letters; and thus he began to teach himself to write. In 1770 he married. His wife was always out of health, so he resolved to move to London, where he could get a better price for his work. Poor they were indeed, for the wife's sickness allowed little to be saved out of the husband's earnings. At last his grandfather in the country left him a legacy of ten pounds. If any one should still think that the means of the humbler classes have not been materially improved by the spread of the knowledge of common things and the facilities of modern civilisation, let them read the following paragraph: "So totally unacquainted was I with the modes of transacting business that I could not point out any method of having my ten pounds sent up to London; at least, no mode that the executor of the will would approve of; it being such a prodigious sum that the greatest caution was used on both sides, so that it cost me about half the money in going down

for it, and in returning to town again." With the remainder of his ten pounds he purchased a few household goods. Whilst he and his poor sick wife were working in their humble room, one of Mr. Wesley's people called, and informed him that there was a shop and parlour to be let in Featherstone-street, and if he were to take it, he might there get some work as a master. Lackington liked the idea, and hinted that he would sell books as well as shoes. When his friend asked how he came to think of selling books, he said that, for several months past, he had observed a great increase in a certain old book shop. He was persuaded that he knew as much of books as the person who kept it; and that if he could but be a bookseller he should have plenty of books to read. So with some odd scraps of leather, and with books that he had got together, worth about five pounds, he increased his capital by borrowing five pounds out of a fund which Mr. Wesley's people kept to lend out. Thus, he says, "notwithstanding the obscurity of the street, and the mean appearance of my shop, yet I soon found customers for what few books I had, and I as soon laid out the money in other old trash which was daily brought for sale." He soon moved his stock, worth about twenty-five pounds, to Chiswell-street, and a few weeks after bade a final adieu to the gentle craft.

The bookseller of Chiswell Street, when he was about thirty years of age, married a second time; his first wife having died of a fever. He also took another decided step. He quitted the Wesleyan society. He appears to have been rather ungrateful

to his old friends, whom he calls "old women," and he became proud of following examples of the incompatability of bookselling with enthusiastic religious feelings. "Mr. Wesley told his society in Broadmead, Bristol, in my hearing, that he could never keep a bookseller six months in his flock." Lackington had now found a most valuable assistant in his wife; "her extreme love for books" making her delight to be in the shop. He obtained also a partner of another character, a capitalist, who enabled him greatly to extend his business, but they differed upon the principle upon which it should be conducted. "I was for selling everything cheap, in order to secure those customers already obtained, as well as increase their numbers." After two years they separated, but continued good friends. Left to his own guidance, Lackington adopted a principle of business which manifests his commercial sagacity. "It was some time in the year 1780 when I resolved from that period to give no person whatever any credit." He was convinced that if he could but establish a ready-money business, without any exceptions, he should be enabled to sell every article very cheap. He marked in every book, facing the title, the lowest price he would take for it. He denied credit to his nearest acquaintance. The rank or respectability of a customer formed no exception. If the books he sent home, even to a nobleman's house, were not paid for on delivery, his porter was to bring the parcel back. The principles of ready-money and small stock have been the foundations of great fortunes in more recent times. Tapes and

ribbons bought and sold upon these principles made a millionnaire not far from Chiswell Street; but Lackington could only pursue one of these roads to fortune. He was compelled, as every bookseller must be, to keep a large stock. Nothing but the most unremitting vigilance could have enabled him to contend against this disadvantage. He describes his constant accumulation of stock; his large purchases at trade sales, such as two hundred, three hundred, five hundred copies of a book. The first Napoleon has been called "the child and champion of Jacobinism." Lackington was the champion of ultra-Jacobinism in the book trade. His revolutionary doings must have carried consternation into the Chapter. "When first invited to these trade sales, I was very much surprised to learn that it was common for such as purchased remainders to *destroy* one half or three fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand; and there was a kind of standing order amongst the trade, that in case any one was known to sell articles under the publication price, such a person was to be excluded from trade sales; so blind were copyright-holders to their own interest." The Chiswell Street innovator having for a little while cautiously complied with this custom, at length "resolved not to destroy any books which were worth saving, but to sell them off at half or a quarter of the publication prices." Of course he was reviled; his ruin was prognosticated; the doors of the trade sale rooms were shut against him. But this could last only a little while. The dams by which this flood of

a natural and truly legitimate trade was attempted to be stopped, were very soon broken down. There were plenty of indirect modes of supplying him with "remainders." "By selling them in this cheap manner, I have disposed of many hundred thousand volumes, many thousands of which have been intrinsically worth their original prices." Customers of all ranks flocked to his shop. It is something higher than the complacency of egotism when he boasts of having thus enabled numbers in inferior situations of life to indulge their natural propensity for the acquisition of knowledge on easy terms. He was in advance of his time when he wrote: "I could almost be vain enough to assert, that I have thereby been highly instrumental in diffusing that general desire for reading, now so prevalent among the inferior orders of society; which most certainly, though it may not prove equally instructive to all, keeps them from employing their time and money, if not to bad, at least to less rational purposes." Reviled and discountenanced by the trade at first, the cheap bookseller soon was supplied with abundant materials for carrying on his system. "Being universally known for making large purchases, most of the trade in town and country, and also authors of every description, are continually furnishing me with opportunities." He was still, however, a subject for the finger of Scorn to point at, even when he had such a command of capital that great publishers no longer stood upon their false and antiquated principles of political economy. He says: "As the first king of Bohemia kept his country shoes by him,

to remind him from whence he was taken, I have put a motto on the doors of my carriage, constantly to remind me to what I am indebted for my prosperity, viz.:—

SMALL PROFITS DO GREAT THINGS."

That carriage was scarcely to be forgiven by his detractors. I have a caricature, in which a grinning assembly, holding up their hands in wonder, stare upon the fortunate cobbler as he mounts upon a pile of books to step into his smart vehicle, drawn up in front of the Temple of the Muses.

It was a matter of surprise, as Lackington informs us, how he acquired any tolerable degree of knowledge, so as to form any idea of the merits of books, or how he became acquainted with the ordinary prices that books, especially foreign, were sold for. He affirms that he always wrote his own catalogues. He learnt enough French to make out and abridge title-pages, and contented himself with reading all the translations of the Classics, inserting the original titles in his catalogues, as well as he could. There is a humourous frankness in what he adds:—"When sometimes I happened to put the genitive or dative case, instead of the nominative or accusative, my customers kindly considered this as a venial fault which they readily pardoned, and bought the books notwithstanding." He had customers in all grades of society—learned and unlearned, rich and poor. He came at a time when the desire for knowledge was extending, as the means of gratifying that desire were constantly increasing. Cause and effect were here blended. Demand

increased supply, and supply increased demand. In 1791, Lackington says that, according to the best estimate he had been able to make, more than four times the number of books were sold then than were sold twenty years before. He speaks also of the formation of book-clubs in every part of England. He had the sense to perceive what effects would be produced by circulating libraries. "I have been informed that, when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed, and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted." The food provided at these repositories was not always of the highest character. Lackington says that he has been told of booksellers who frequently offer as low as half-a-guinea per volume for novels in manuscript. Of Mr. William Lane, who died in 1814, at the age of seventy-six, Mr. Bowyer Nichols says: "He was long distinguished for his numerous publications of novels, and for the energy with which he established circulating libraries in almost every town in the kingdom." Wonderful productions were those of the Minerva press, which had superseded for a while by their decorum, their insipidity, and their really low morality, the outspoken words of the great novelists of the middle of the century. The chief supporters of the circulating libraries have a good word from Lackington. English ladies, he said, now in general

not only read novels but the best books in the English language: "There are some thousands of ladies, which come to my shop, that know as well what books to choose, and are as well acquainted with works of taste and genius, as any gentleman in the kingdom, notwithstanding the sneer against novel readers."

There were not many of the old booksellers, I fear, who thought with Lackington that the spread of Sunday Schools would "accelerate the diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes of the community, and in a very few years exceedingly increase the sale of books." In the same way, when much more effectual means of popular education had grown out of the humble Sunday Schools, there were very few of the successors of the old booksellers who could believe that the returns and the profits of cheap publications would be twenty-fold those of books for the rich and luxurious. If the London booksellers in Lackington's time were afraid of low prices, how much more would the country booksellers dread this disturbance of their old habits of business. He gives us little information about their dealings in new works; but it was not likely to be very extensive, if we may judge from his account of the provincial trade in old books. In 1787, he set off from London to Edinburgh, and was led from motives of curiosity, as well as with the view of making some valuable purchases, to examine the booksellers' shops. His disappointment is thus related: "Although I went by the way of York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c., and returned through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, Lancaster,

Preston, Manchester, and other considerable places, I was much surprised, as well as disappointed, at meeting with very few of the works of the most esteemed authors, and those few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books, bound in sheep, and that too in a very bad manner. It is true, at York and Leeds there were a few (and but very few) good books; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found: in the latter city, indeed, a few capital articles are kept, but in no other part of Scotland." He repeated his journey in 1790, with the same results; and he found no exception to his complaint in the West of England. London was "the grand emporium of Great Britain for books, engrossing nearly the whole of what is valuable in that very extensive, beneficial, and lucrative branch of trade."

Here I take leave of this remarkable man, who did not wholly quit business till 1798. He returned to the Wesleyan connexion, built and endowed three chapels, and died in 1815, at the age of seventy. Like most self-raised men, he was proud of his humble origin, when he exhibited the grandeur of his altered circumstances. The following passage, of the date of 1791, is characteristic: "In Bristol, Exbridge, Bridgewater, Taunton, Wellington, and other places, I amused myself in calling on some of my masters, with whom I had about twenty years before worked as a journeyman shoemaker. I addressed each with 'Pray, Sir, have you got any occasion?' which is the term made use of by journey-

men in that useful occupation when seeking employment. Most of these honest men had quite forgotten my person, as many of them had not seen me since I worked for them; so that it is not easy for you to conceive with what surprise and astonishment they gazed on me. For you must know that I had the vanity (I call it humour) to do this in my chariot, attended by my servants; and on telling them who I was, all appeared to be very happy to see me."

A short time before the death of the fortunate bookseller of Finsbury Square, died WILLIAM GARDINER, bookseller, of Pall Mall. The character and career of this man, his various talents, his taste and knowledge, his eccentricity, his misery, and its wretched termination, present such a contrast to James Lackington, that they may fitly come together in this concluding chapter. Gardiner committed suicide on the 8th of May, 1814. On the day before he died, he sent a memoir of himself to a friend. This short autobiography appeared in a newspaper of the time; and of this I have a cutting accompanying the unfortunate man's portrait. It is a face of remarkable intelligence and refinement. The inscription under this pleasing representation is, "Celebrated by the Rev. Mr. Dibdin, in his 'Bibliomania,' under the character of Mustapha." I give an extract from that character, drawn by one who had manifestly received some offence from the imprudent frequenter of book auctions: "He comes forth like an alchemist from his laboratory, with hat and wig 'sprinkled with learned dust,' and deals out his censures with as little

ceremony as correctness. It is of no consequence to him by whom positions are advanced, or truth is established. * * * Our book-vender, in the catalogues which he puts forth, shows himself to be a great and bold 'carpenter of words;' overcharging the description of his own volumes with tropes, metaphors, flourishes, and common-place authorities, the latter of which one would think had but recently come under his notice, as they had been already before the public in various less ostentatious forms."* Lackington had no itch for setting forth his knowledge in his catalogues. He was a shrewd tradesman. Poor Gardiner was a man of genius. He early manifested a taste for drawing; and having come to London, became an engraver. In this profession he was successful, and engraved many plates with the name of Bartolozzi affixed to them. Some publishers were not very scrupulous as to this species of deception. Gardiner says, "I believe I was inferior only to Bartolozzi, Schiavonetti, and Tomkins of that day; but I never liked the profession of engraving. Gay, volatile, and lively as a lark, the process of the copper never suited me. Under propitious circumstances, my talents would have led me, perhaps, as an historical painter, to do something worth remembrance." He at length abandoned the profession of an engraver. One of his eyes, by incautious exposure, having become inflamed, never recovered its strength. "This," he says, "has been the cause of all my subsequent endeavours to get a living in other lines."

* 'Bibliomania,' p. 122.

He now, by the kindness of Dr. Farmer, was admitted to Emanuel College, Cambridge, and, removing to Bene't, became the Fifth Senior Optime. He was five years dangling after a fellowship, but without success. He then returned to London, and attained eminence in copying oil portraits in water colours. Another change of occupation—and then the end. He "perished in his pride."

Melancholy, indeed, is the record of this unhappy man's career as a London bookseller. But the story of misfortune, and the story of success, are equally instructive. "All prospects in the church vanishing, and my eyes beginning to fail very fast, I turned bookseller, and for the last thirteen years have struggled in vain to establish myself. The same ill fortune which has followed me through life, has not here forsaken me. I have seen men on every side of me, greatly my inferiors in every respect, towering above me; while the most contemptible amongst them, without education, without a knowledge of their profession, and without an idea, have been received into palaces, and into the bosom of the great, while I have been forsaken and neglected, and my business reduced to nothing. It is, therefore, high time for me to be gone." Mr. Bowyer Nichols (who prints, in his 'Illustrations of Literary History,' the newspaper memoir which I have quoted) does justice to the memory of this unfortunate bookseller. He had married an interesting and well-educated woman with some fortune, but his wife and child dying, he became regardless of appearances, and sank into the slovenly Mustapha that Dibdin has described. His shop was

ill-kept; the curious volumes upon his shelves were always dirty and ill-arranged; the ordinary civilities to his customers were put aside. Though men of learning and literary celebrity came there to profit by his various knowledge, and to enjoy his brilliant conversation, he had not the art of making money by buying and selling, as the unlearned man had, who, in copying titles, mistook the dative for the accusative case. Following an intellectual occupation, he did not perceive that qualities for the working day were necessary to make a prosperous tradesman.

APPENDIX.

THE following is a reprint, without alteration, of an article written by the author of this volume in 1834, and published in a monthly periodical called 'The Printing Machine.' It contains some general views of the progress of Printing and Bookselling in England which may illustrate some of the details of the preceding pages. The date of this paper must be borne in mind by the reader of thirty years later:—

THE MARKET OF LITERATURE.

THERE was an ingenious gentleman in the seventeenth century who was greatly alarmed lest the breed of horses should be annihilated in England, by the introduction of public conveyances. The people that were accustomed to ride "their good pad-nags" wickedly preferred, he says, the smaller cost of making their journeys in the stage-coaches "that go to almost every town within twenty or twenty-five miles of London, at very low rates; so that," he adds, "by *computation*, there are not so many horses, by 10,000, kept now in these parts, as there were before stage-coaches set up."

It would be very easy *now*, by *computation*, to show that the establishment of public carriages has multiplied the breed of horses fifty-fold more than it would have multiplied, had the rich only continued to use horses. But that is not our present business. What the worthy encourager of travelling maintained would happen, and, indeed, had happened, by the extension of the advantages of travelling from the few to the many, a considerable number of the worthy encouragers of knowledge maintain will happen, and, indeed, has happened, by a similar extension of the benefits of knowledge. They show, by *compu-*

tation, that the breed of books has deteriorated—that the market for books is narrowed—and that "there are not so many books, by 10,000, used now in these parts, as there were before books for all, at very low rates, were set up." The complaint may be just; but we shall take the liberty of investigating its correctness with a care proportioned to the alleged magnitude of the evil.

To conduct this investigation upon *data* that may be satisfactory to ourselves and our readers, we must open a very wide field of inquiry. It embraces the literary history, not only of England, but of every other country where books are printed. The subject is a most interesting one; but its facts are to be sought for in barren and thorny places. In the present paper we can only bring together some of the more striking results which lie upon the surface. It is possible that we may occasionally devote some other papers to particular branches of the inquiry. In the mean time this preliminary view will, if we mistake not, establish one great truth—that at every step of the diffusion of knowledge, from the first slow efforts of the rude Printing Press of 1460, to the last rapid workings of the Printing Machine of 1833, the foundations of the prosperity, the independence, and the consequent excellence of literature, have been deepened and widened; and the condition of every labourer and chapman in the market of literature successively ameliorated. If we do not show this by *computation*, we shall be content to believe, for the rest of our lives, that good horses and good books will never appear again in England; and that, as the Bristol mail is the destruction of travelling, so the 'Penny Cyclopædia' is the destruction of literature. We are not obstinate.

We may probably simplify this large subject, by determining to confine this introductory paper to the progress of printing in England, and by dividing this progress into five periods, viz:—

I. From 1471 (the introduction of printing by Caxton) to the accession of James I., 1603.
II. From 1603 to the Revolution, 1688.
III. From 1688 to the accession of George III., 1760.
IV. From 1760 to 1800.
V. From 1800 to 1833.*

* I omit this latter period, which does not belong to the subject of the "Old Booksellers."

I. It is a remarkable characteristic of the first century of printing, not only in this country but wherever a press was erected, that the highest and most constant efforts of the new art were addressed to the diffusion of the old stores of knowledge, rather than to an enlargement of the stores. The early professors of the art on the continent,—in Germany, Italy, and France,—were scholars who knew the importance of securing the world's inheritance of the knowledge of Greece and Rome from any further destruction, such as the scattered manuscripts of the ancient poets, and orators, and historians had experienced, through neglect and ignorance. The press would put them fairly beyond the reach of any new waste. But after the first half century of printing, when these manuscripts had been copied in type, and the public libraries and the princes and nobles of Europe had been supplied, a fresh want arose out of the satisfaction of the former want. Men of letters, who did not belong to the class of the rich, anxiously demanded copies of the ancient classics, and their demands were not made in vain. The Alduses, and Stephenses, and Plantins, did not hold it good to keep books dear for the advancement of letters; they anxiously desired to make them cheap; and they produced, therefore, not expensive folios only, as their predecessors had done, but neat and compactly printed octavos and duodecimos, for the general market. The instant that they did this, the foundations of literature were widened and deepened. They probably at first overrated the demand; indeed, we know they did so—and they suffered in consequence. But the time was sure to come when their labours would be rewarded; and, at any rate, they were at once placed beyond a servile dependence upon patrons. When they had their customers in every great city and university, they did not wait for the approving nod of a pope or a cardinal before they began to print.

A new demand very soon followed upon the first demand for cheap copies of the ancient classics; and this was even more completely the demand of the people. The doctrines of the Reformation had proclaimed the Bible as the best spiritual guide and teacher,—and the people would have Bibles. The first English Bible was bought up and burnt; those who bought the Bibles contributed capital for making new Bibles, and those who burnt the Bibles advertised them. The first printers of the Bible

were, however, cautious—they did not see the number of readers upon which they were to rely for a sale. In 1540 Grafton printed but 500 copies of his complete edition of the Scriptures; and yet, so great was the rush to this new supply of the most important knowledge, that we have existing 326 editions of the English Bible, or parts of the Bible, printed between 1526 and 1600.

The early English printers did not attempt what the continental ones were doing for the ancient classics. Down to 1540 no Greek book had appeared from an English press. Oxford had only printed a part of Cicero's Epistles; Cambridge, no ancient writer whatever:—only three or four old Roman writers had been reprinted, at that period, throughout England. But a great deal was done for public instruction by the course which our early printers took; for, as one of them says—"Divers famous clerks and learned men translated and made many noble works into our English tongue, whereby there was much more plenty and abundance of English used than there was in times past." The English nobility were, probably, for more than the first half century of English printing, the great encouragers of our press:—they required translations and abridgments of the classics—versions of French and Italian romances—old chronicles, and helps to devout exercises. Caxton and his successors abundantly supplied these wants; and the impulse to most of their exertions was given by the growing demand for literary amusement on the part of the great. Caxton, speaking of his 'Boke of Eneydos,' says—"This present book is not for a rude uplandish man to labour therein, nor read it; but only for a clerk and a noble gentleman, that feeleth and understandeth in feats of arms, in love, and in noble chivalry." But a great change was working in Europe; the "rude uplandish man," if he gave promise of talent, was sent to school. The priests strove with the laity for the education of the people; and not only in Protestant, but in Catholic countries were schools and universities everywhere founded. Here, again, was a new source of employment for the press—A. B. C.'s or Absies, Primers, Catechisms, Grammars, Dictionaries, were multiplied in every direction. Books became, also, during this period, the tools of professional men. There were not many works of medicine, but a great many of law. The people, too, required instruction in the ordinances they were

called upon to obey;—and thus the Statutes, mostly written in French, were translated and abridged by Rastell, our first law-printer.

After all this rush of the press of England towards the diffusion of existing knowledge, it began to assist in the production of new works, but in very different directions. Much of the poetry of the sixteenth century, which our press spread around, will last for ever: its controversial divinity has, in great part, perished. Each, however, was a natural supply, arising out of the demand of the people; as much as the chronicles, and romances, and grammars were a natural supply; and as the almanacs, and mysteries, and ballads, which the people also then had, were a natural supply. Taken altogether, the activity of the press of England, during the first period of our inquiry, was very remarkable. Ames and Herbert have recorded the names of 350 printers in England and Scotland, or of foreign printers engaged in producing books for England, that flourished between 1471 and 1600. The same authors have recorded the titles (we have counted with sufficient accuracy to make the assertion) of nearly 10,000 distinct works printed amongst us during the same period. Many of these works, however, were only single sheets; but, on the other hand, there are, doubtless, many not here registered. Dividing the total number of books printed during these 130 years, we find that the average number of distinct works produced each year was 75.

When Leo X. gave a privilege, in 1553, to the second Aldus for printing 'Varro,' the Pope required that the book should be sold cheap. Cheapness in books is a relative term: it must depend upon the probable number of purchasers. If 'Varro' were likely to be extensively read, Aldus could afford to sell it cheaply: if he counted only upon a small impression, it must of necessity have been dear. The principle that chiefly determines price, in the commerce of books, is the number of the purchasers. It is sufficiently evident that, long after the invention of printing, and its introduction into England, books were dear. In the 'Privy Purse Accounts of Elizabeth of York,' published by Sir H. Nicolas, we find that, in 1505, twenty pence were paid for a 'Primer' and a 'Psalter.' In 1505, twenty pence would have bought half a load of barley, and were equal to six days' work of

a labourer. In 1516, 'Fitzherbert's Abridgment,' a large folio law-book, then first published, was sold for forty shillings. At that time, forty shillings would have bought three fat oxen. Books gradually became cheaper, as the printers ventured to rely upon a larger number of purchasers. The exclusive privileges that were given to individuals for printing all sorts of books, during the reigns of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth,—although they were in accordance with the spirit of monopoly which characterised that age, and were often granted to prevent the spread of books,—offer a proof that the market was not large enough to enable the producers to incur the risk of competition. One with another, 200 copies may be estimated to have been printed of each book during the period we have been noticing; we think that proportion would have been quite adequate to the supply of the limited number of readers,—to many of whom the power of reading was a novelty, unsanctioned by the practice of their forefathers.

II. The second period of the English press, from the accession of James I. to the Revolution, is, perhaps, all circumstances considered, the least favourable to the diffusion of knowledge of any period in our whole literary history. In the reign of the first Stuart came an inundation of pedantry, which surrounded the court with verbal criticism and solemn quibble:—the people, indeed, had their glorious dramatists, but Bacon was looked upon as an impracticable dreamer. Controversy, too, began to be rife in England; and the spirit at last exploded in such a torrent of civil and ecclesiastical violence in the reign of James's successor, as left the many little leisure for the cultivation of their understandings. The press was absorbed by the productions of this furious spirit. There is, in the British Museum, a collection of 2000 volumes of Tracts issued between the years 1640 and 1660, the whole number of which several publications amounts to the enormous quantity of 30,000. This most curious collection was made by a bookseller of the name of Tomlinson, in the times when the tracts were printed;—was bargained for, but not bought, by Charles II.;—and was eventually bought by George III., and presented by him to the British Museum. The number of impressions of new books unconnected with controversial subjects, printed during these stormy days, must have been

very small. Dr. Johnson has remarked that the nation, from 1623 to 1664, was satisfied with two editions of Shakspeare's Plays, which, probably, together did not amount to a thousand copies.

At the Restoration our national literature, with a very few grand exceptions, put on the lowest garb in which literature can be arrayed; it was the toy of the king and his courtezans. Charles II. and his followers brought hither the spirit of the literary parasites of Louis XIV., with whom the great were everything, the people nothing. Small, indeed, must have been the consumption of books amongst those who

"Hated not learning worse than asp or toad,"

looking upon men of letters as the old monarchs looked upon their jesters. Under such a state of things, Milton received fifteen pounds for the copy of 'Paradise Lost;' and an Act of Parliament was passed that only twenty printers should practise their art in the kingdom. We see by a petition to Parliament in 1666, that there were only 140 "working printers" in London. They were quite enough to produce the gimcracks of literature for the court.* Burton, who lived near these days, has drawn a fearful picture of the abject condition of men of learning, before they had a public to rely upon:—"Rhetoric only serves them to curse their bad fortunes; and many of them, for want of means, are driven to hard shift. From grasshoppers they turn humble-bees and wasps, plain parasites, and make the Muses mules, to satisfy their hunger-starved paunches, and get a meal's meat." This is the high and palmy state of men of genius, which some amongst us are desirous of bringing back, by redeeming literature from the contaminating touch of the multitude. These persons must be ignorant that nearly all that is glorious and enduring in our literature has been built upon the demands of the people. Our dramatists were essentially the ministers of taste, ay, and of knowledge, to the people; and so were our fine old divines. Who have perished—the verbal

* 'La letteratura era una chingaglieria per la corte.'—See an able dissertation, by Count Pecchio, on the application of the general laws of production to literary and scientific productions.—*Lugano*, 1832.

pedants (we forget even their names), who were doing homage to the first James as the Solomon of his age, or the Beaumonts and Jonsons, who were living upon the breath of the mob's applause at the Globe Theatre? Who are banished to utter oblivion,—the Sedleys and Rochesters, who were exciting the gross passions of the second Charles, or the Taylors and Souths, who were pouring forth their fervid eloquence and their poignant wit upon the vulgar many?

At the fire of London, in 1666, the booksellers dwelling about St. Paul's lost an immense stock of books in quires, amounting, according to Evelyn, to 200,000*l.*, which they were accustomed to stow in the vaults of the metropolitan cathedral, and of other neighbouring churches. At that time the people were beginning to read again, and to think;—and as new capital naturally rushed in to replace the consumed stock of books, there was considerable activity once more in printing. The laws regulating the number of printers soon after fell into disuse, as they had long fallen into contempt. We have before us a catalogue (the first compiled in this country) of "all the books printed in England since the dreadful fire, 1666, to the end of Trinity Term, 1680," which catalogue is continued to 1685, year by year. A great many—we may fairly say one-half—of these books, are single sermons and tracts. The whole number of books printed during the fourteen years from 1666 to 1680, we ascertain, by counting, was 3550, of which 947 were divinity, 420 law, and 153 physic,—so that two-fifths of the whole were professional books; 397 were school books, and 253 on subjects of geography and navigation, including maps. Taking the average of these fourteen years, the total number of works produced yearly was 253; but deducting the reprints, pamphlets, single sermons, and maps, we may fairly assume that the yearly average of new books was much under 100. Of the number of copies constituting an edition we have no record; we apprehend it must have been small, for the price of a book, as far as we can ascertain it, was considerable. Roger North, speaking of those booksellers of his day who had the knack of getting up volumes on temporary matters, says, "They crack their brains to find out selling subjects, and keep hirelings in garrets, on hard meat, to write and correct by the grate; so puff up an

octavo to a sufficient thickness, and there is *six shillings* current for an hour and a half's reading." In a catalogue, with prices, printed twenty-two years after the one we have just noticed, we find that the ordinary cost of an octavo was *five shillings*.

III. We have arrived at the third stage of our rapid and imperfect sketch — from the Revolution to the accession of George III.

This period will be ever memorable in our literary history for the creation, in great part, of periodical literature. Till newspapers, and magazines, and reviews, and cyclopædias were established, the people, even the middle classes, could not fairly be said to have possessed themselves of the keys of knowledge.

The publication of *intelligence* began, as many of our readers know, during the wars of Charles I. and his Parliament. But the 'Mercuries' of those days were little more than occasional pamphlets. Burton speaks of a 'Pamphlet of News.' Before the Revolution, there were several London papers, regulated, however, by privileges and surveyors of the Press. Soon after the beginning of the eighteenth century (1709), London had one daily paper, fifteen three times a week, and one twice a week: this was before a stamp-duty was imposed on papers. After the stamp-duty in 1724, there were three daily papers, six weekly, and ten three times a week. Provincial newspapers had been established in several places at this period. The reign of Anne also saw a new and most successful species of literature—the issue of a periodical paper, which should contain something less exciting and more conducive to a healthy state of the public intellect, than the mere rumours of foreign wars or domestic scandals. The 'Tatler,' 'Spectator,' 'Guardian,' and other popular works, were, to the middle classes of those days, what the 'Penny Knowledge' is to the humbler classes, and the young of all classes, at the present day. We never heard that the remnant of the old literary court-tinkers of the Stuarts ventured to predict the downfall of English literature, because the 'Spectator' was published at a penny; or that the Tonsons and Lintotts maintained that Pope could not produce them a translation of Homer, because he had written in a penny Guardian. They were wiser in their generation, and believed, as an old French bookseller believed, or is said to have believed,

"Plus on lit, plus on lira—plus il faut, plus il faudra des livres."*

The creation of another new species of literature in this period, is to be ascribed to the strong good sense of a printer, who saw that, even with their daily and weekly papers, the middle classes were ill-supplied with miscellaneous information. Cave, in this spirit, projected the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' He offered a share in it to half the booksellers in London; they one and all rejected the project as absurd. They had not learnt, even by the success of the 'Essayists,' to rely upon a large number of purchasers. In 1731, Cave, at his own risk, produced the first magazine printed in England—the 'Gentleman's.' Its success was so great, that in the following year the booksellers, who could not understand Cave's project till they knew its value by experiment, set up a rival magazine, 'The London.' In 1749, the first review, 'The Monthly,' was started; and in a few years was followed by 'The Critical.' It is not our purpose to trace the history of our monthly reviews and magazines. They did an immense deal for literature and the literary character. They took the patronage of men of letters out of the hands of the great and the fashionable, and confided it to the people. They might not create poets and philosophers, but they prevented kings and lords pretending to create them.

"Un Auguste peut aisément faire un Virgile,"

looked like a truism in the court of Louis XIV.; it became a bad joke when, relying upon the humble printer of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' Johnson dared to describe "the patron and the gaol" as the common curses of the scholar. Johnson learnt in the school of the people to depend upon the people, through their interpreters, the booksellers, as the only patrons whose resources would last beyond the hour of sunshine. He was in the transition state from the patronage of the few to the patronage of the many, and he therefore endured great privations. But he clearly saw the time was coming, when the literary man

* 'The more people read the more they will read—the more the world wants books the more they will want."—*Histoire des Français des divers états*, vol. vi., p. 121.

would find, in the extension of the demand for knowledge, the broadest and surest foundation for his own reward as a labourer in the vineyard of knowledge.

The periodical literature of the era we are speaking of swallowed up a vast number of the pamphlets through which writers used to communicate their thoughts to the world. Disputants in a little circle found in the magazines a vent for their opinions, theological, moral, political, and antiquarian. This circumstance, of course, greatly reduced the number of merely temporary books; and it had thus the advantage of imparting to our literature a more solid character. Making a proportionate deduction for the pamphlets inserted in the catalogues we have already referred to, it appears to us, however, that the great influx of periodical literature, although constituting a most important branch of literary commerce, had, in some degree, the effect of narrowing the publication of new books; and perhaps wholesomely so. That the growth of periodical literature would produce the incontestible effect of general knowledge, that of causing the appetite to grow by what it feeds upon, we cannot doubt; but the new body of readers that periodical literature had won from the *middle* classes, might rather desire the old solid dishes, than crave after hastily-produced novelties. Be this as it may, the number of *new* books published in this period was not large. We have before us a 'Complete Catalogue of Modern Books published from the beginning of the century to 1756;'—from which "all pamphlets and other tracts" are excluded. We find that in these fifty-seven years, 5280 new works appeared, which exhibits only an average of ninety-three new works each year.

We are inclined to think that the numbers of an edition printed had been increased; for, however strange it may appear, the general prices of the works in this catalogue are as low, if not lower, than in a priced catalogue we also have of books printed in the years 1702 and 1703. A quarto published in the first half of the last century seems to have averaged from 10*s.* to 12*s.* per volume; an octavo, from 5*s.* to 6*s.*; and a duodecimo from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* In the earlier catalogue we have mentioned, pretty much the same prices exist: and yet an excise had been laid upon paper; the prices of authorship, even for the humblest

labours, were raised, at least, two hundred per cent. above the prices of the time of John Dunton, who says "his great talent lies at *collection*, and he will do it for you at six shillings a sheet;"* and, more than all, the cost of the necessaries of life was much advanced. We can only account for this upon the principle, that the publishers of the first half of the eighteenth century knew their trade, and, printing larger numbers, adapted their prices to the extension of the market. They also, in many cases, lessened their risk by publishing by subscription—a practice now almost disreputable, but possessing great advantages for the production of costly books. This was, in many respects, the golden age for publishers, when large and certain fortunes were made,—when there was not a great deal of a gambling spirit in the business. Perhaps much of this proceeded from the publishers aiming less to produce novelty than excellence—selling *large impressions of few books*, and not distracting the public with their noisy competition in the manufacture of new wares for the market of the hour. Publishers thus grew into higher influence in society. They had long ceased to carry their books to Bristol or Stourbridge fairs, or to hawk them about the country in auctions for the unwary. The trade of books had gone into regular commercial channels.

IV. The period from the accession of George III. to the close of the eighteenth century, is marked by the rapid increase of the demand for popular literature, rather than by any prominent features of originality in literary production. Periodical literature spread on every side; newspapers, magazines, reviews, were multiplied; and the old system of selling books by hawkers was extended to the rural districts, and small provincial towns. Of the *number books* thus produced, the quality was indifferent, with a few exceptions; and the cost of these works was considerable. The principle, however, was then first developed, of extending the market, by coming into it at regular intervals with fractions of a book, so that the humblest customer might lay by each week in a savings-bank of knowledge. This was an important step, which has produced great effects, but which is even now capable of a much more universal application than

* 'Life and Errors,' vol. i. p. 181.

it has ever yet received. Smollett's 'History of England' was one of the most successful number-books; it sold to the extent of 20,000 copies.

We may exhibit the rapid growth of the publication of *new* books, by examining the catalogues of the latter part of the eighteenth century, passing over the earlier years of the reign of George III. In the 'Modern Catalogue of Books,' from 1792 to the end of 1802, eleven years, we find that 4096 *new* works were published, exclusive of reprints not altered in price, and also exclusive of pamphlets: deducting one-fifth for reprints, we have an average of 372 new books per year. This is a prodigious stride beyond the average of 93 per year of the previous period. But we are not sure that our literature was in a more healthy condition. From some cause or other, the selling price of books had increased, in most cases 50 per cent., in others, 100 per cent. The 2*s.* 6*d.* duodecimo had become 4*s.*; the 6*s.* octavo, 10*s.* 6*d.*; and the 12*s.* quarto 1*l.* 1*s.* It would appear from this that the exclusive market was principally sought for new books; that the publishers of novelties did not rely upon the increasing number of readers; and that the periodical works constituted the principal supply of the many. The aggregate increase of the commerce in books must, however, have become enormous, when compared with the previous fifty years; and the effect was highly beneficial to the literary character. The age of patronage was gone.

V. This modern era is still more remarkable for an extended commerce in books.

The number of new publications issued from 1800 to 1827, including reprints altered in size or price, but exclusive of pamphlets, was, according to the London Catalogue, 19,860. Deducting one-fifth for the reprints, we have 15,888 new books in twenty-seven years,—showing an average of 588 new books per year,—being an increase of 216 per year over the last eleven years of the previous century. Books, however, were still rising in price. The 4*s.* duodecimo of the former period became 6*s.*, or was converted into a small 8vo. at 10*s.* 6*d.*; the 10*s.* 6*d.* octavo became 12*s.* or 14*s.*, and the guinea quarto very commonly two guineas. Here, we think, was still an evidence that the new books were for an exclusive market, whether of individual custo-

mers or circulating libraries. Circulating libraries and reading societies did a vast deal for literary production; they rendered the demand to a considerable degree certain; but they would have done a great deal more if prices had not been so extravagantly raised. The libraries would have taken duplicates and triplicates instead of single copies: the publisher and author would have been paid as well, and the public would have been better supplied. The publishers of new books did not rely for a demand upon a great body of purchasers. For the many, however, the periodical works went on largely increasing, and their quality was decidedly improved.

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